Exploring Cuban Music through the Choral Arrangements of Electo Silva

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EXPLORING CUBAN MUSIC THROUGH THE CHORAL ARRANGEMENTS OF ELECTO SILVA

By

Beth Gibbs

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

Submitted to the Faculty of the University of Miami in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Coral Gables, Florida

May 2010
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

A doctoral essay submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

EXPLORING CUBAN MUSIC THROUGH THE CHORAL ARRANGEMENTS OF ELECTO SILVA

Beth Gibbs

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A prolific arranger and composer, Electo Silva is an iconic figure in the field of choral music in Cuba. His collection of traditional Cuban songs entitled 30 canciones populares cubanas presents an array of influential pieces that have enriched the repertoire for mixed a cappella choirs. Six titles have been extracted from the catalog of thirty to more closely examine characteristics of genre and style, composition and structure, and language and performance practice. Historical background is defined, cultural and folkloric traditions are explored, and suggestions for performance are offered. The essay is designed to assist the non-Cuban conductor in creating a successful culturally and historically accurate performance. English translations, International Phonetic Alphabet transcriptions, and musical examples are added to assist in the conductor’s research and preparation.
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CHAPTER 1
THE INTRODUCTION

The richness of Cuban music comes from a unique hybrid of two distinct and influential cultures. The beautiful melodies of Spain and the exciting rhythms of Africa combine to create an extraordinary musical tapestry steeped in tradition and history. The culture of Cuba is driven by its music, and the energy and spirit of the Cuban people is expressed vibrantly in this medium. From street corners to concert halls, music is a vital element of communication on the island, and its stylistic variety is vast.

The choral tradition of Cuba is a very strong component of its musical expression and spans every genre and time period. In fact, it propels the history of music forward, bringing to life the ideas of contemporary composers and rejuvenating the ideas of Cuba’s past musical legends. The purpose of this essay is to explore the choral arrangements of Electo Silva (b. 1928), specifically selections from his collection 30 canciones populares cubanas as a guide to highlight the musical traditions of Cuba in the early and middle twentieth century. Six titles have been selected from Silva’s collection. Through these arrangements, elements of history, culture, language, and structure will guide a discussion intended to educate and instruct choral directors concerning performance practice and pedagogy, so that they, along with their choirs and audiences, can enjoy this remarkable music.
The anthology 30 canciones populares cubanas contains traditional Cuban songs from the late 1800s and the early decades of the 1900s. These songs were all originally written by various artists for solo voice or trio, most often with guitar or piano accompaniment, and have been arranged by Silva for a cappella mixed choir. This essay examines the selected pieces and their structure, and explores the history of the genres in question to provide a necessary historical background for analysis. The text and language is discussed and translations and IPA transcriptions offered as an appendix, as well as other pertinent information about the compositions.

The analysis does not serve as the only means to explain the widespread popularity and acceptance of a composition. In order for a work to truly gain an international audience, steps must be taken to assuage any misconceptions or barriers surrounding the material, and strategies must be presented to assist in its successful implementation into an already rich field of repertoire. In the case of Cuban choral music, its absence from American concert halls and choral music libraries is attributable to many factors, one of which is a general hesitation toward world music, and specifically music with such complications as challenging rhythms and foreign language. A strong performance ethic is also an underlying cause: conductors unfamiliar with the style do not want to inaccurately present repertoire to their audiences. This essay addresses the Cuban choral arrangements themselves but also considers ways to integrate them into existing choral traditions by providing descriptions of teaching strategies and performance practices. The essay provides information designed to ease the mind of the anxious conductor and to enrich the performing experience of the chorister.
Although there are many anthologies that contain music from different countries and cultures in Latin America, not much attention is given specifically to the music of Cuba, and very little is published on the methodology and pedagogy of Cuban choral music. The lack of resources hinders its popularity and complicates the process of performance practice. This essay presents a battery of information designed to partially bridge that gap and allow a close-up view of a minute fraction of choral music that has gone relatively unnoticed outside of its point of geographical origin.

The strategies and suggestions put forth in this essay stem from a combination of two sources: 1) visits to the island of Cuba, during which the author attended rehearsals and concerts and also conducted interviews with musicologists, prominent choirs, their directors, and other influential personalities in the field, and 2) a concert in the United States of the selected pieces and the preceding rehearsal process, allowing a detailed knowledge of the repertoire and revealing its unique challenges for a non-Cuban choir.

The pieces contained in Electo Silva’s *30 canciones populares cubanas* create a collection of some of the most well-known songs in Cuban tradition. This music represents several genres, but there are high concentrations of *son* and bolero, along with a few very influential *guajiras*. It is for this reason that in this essay chapters are dedicated to the history and origin of each of those three genres.

With such an immense topic, it is not to be assumed that all aspects of Cuban music can be covered or the entirety of the history of choral music in Cuba can be explained. The experiences mentioned above, combined with research in the genres of the *guajira*, the bolero, and the *son*, laid the foundation for this essay.
CHAPTER 2

THE CLAVE

It is impossible to discuss Cuban music without first addressing the driving force behind it: the clave. This rhythmic concept can be found, in some form, in nearly all music of Cuban origin and represents the influence of its percussive African parent. The word clave is associated with a rhythmic pattern, as well as the instrument that plays this pattern. The instrument can be traced back to the shipyards of Havana in the late seventeenth century, where in the absence of nails ships were held together by very dense wooden pegs called clavijas. Due to the prohibition of drums in the shipyards, it was perhaps inevitable that an alternate percussion instrument would be created, and the clavijas were perfect. In Spanish the word clave has several meanings: it can refer to a musical clef, but can also mean key or keystone (to unlock a code). This is particularly fitting, since the clave rhythm is considered the key to all Cuban music.

A five-note pattern, the clave is divided into two halves: one group of three and one group of two. It is identified by which side of the pattern is sounded first, creating the possibility of a 3-2 clave or a 2-3 clave. It can be notated in either simple or compound meter, and in either a one-measure (12/8 or 4/4) or two-measure (6/8 or 2/4) format. In Cuba there are two universally accepted forms: the son clave and the rumba

---


2 The word commonly used for key is llave.
Figures 2.1-2.4 show the son clave (the pattern used to accompany son, further discussed in Chapter 5) in simple meter, followed by the same rhythmic pattern notated in compound meter. Both one- and two-measure patterns are shown to facilitate further discussion.

Figure 2.1. Son Clave in 2/4

3-2

Figure 2.2. Son Clave in 6/8

3-2

3 A distinction is made here that the discussion that follows is about the Cuban clave because there is also a Brazilian clave which differs slightly from the Cuban son clave and rumba clave patterns.
Figure 2.3. *Son Clave* in 4/4

![Son Clave in 4/4](image)

Figure 2.4. *Son Clave* in 12/8

![Son Clave in 12/8](image)

The *rumba clave* is identical to the *son clave* except for the third stroke of the five-stroke pattern: in the *rumba clave* it is sounded half a beat later than it is in the *son clave*. The *rumba* is a solo male dance designed to demonstrate strength and intelligence, inspired by the Abakuá or Ñáñigo secret.

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4 The mention of “half a beat” is in reference to 2/4 time.
society. This *rumba* is performed to a *clave* in compound meter (12/8). The *yambú* is a dance for couples where “the dancers imitate the elderly and pretend to have difficulty moving.” In contrast to that, the *guaguancó rumba* is also a couple’s dance—but a very suggestive one. The dancers move in overtly sexual ways (known as *vacunao*) and depict a scene where the man is trying to capture the attention of a resistant woman. Both the *yambú* and the *guaguancó rumbas* are performed in a simple-meter *clave*. Figures 2.5-2.8 show examples of the *rumba clave* (sometimes referred to as the *guaguancó clave*) in simple and compound meter, in both one- and two-measure patterns.

Figure 2.5. *Rumba Clave* in 2/4

![Diagram of clave in 2/4]

5 The Abakuá secret society (whose members are also called Náñigo) originated in the Calabar region of Nigeria. This all-male group became prevalent in the strongly Afro-Cuban influenced port cities of Matanzas, Havana, and Cardenas, Cuba in the early nineteenth century. Caribe Insider “Afrocaribbean Religions: Abakua” http://www.caribeinsider.com/showreligion.do?code=001 (accessed February 14, 2010).


It is not uncommon to hear a composite of both the *son* and *rumba claves* together in one pattern, shown in figures 2.9 and 2.10.\(^9\)

\(^9\) Ibid., 82.
The clave, on a macro level, is one entire rhythmic concept. Dissected further, however, it is divided into two parts: the side with three strokes and the side with two strokes. As shown in figures 2.1-2.8, using standard musical notation it is possible to write the pattern in either one or two measures, depending on one’s genre or meter of choice. The ability to place the clave pattern into one measure, however, should not overshadow the larger picture and intent of the clave’s duality. It is designed as an idea with two halves, one which is stronger than the other. Depending on where in the pattern you start, either the “three side” (stronger) or the “two side” (weaker), it can convey and idea of question and answer but can also be the opposite—one of arsis and thesis—if begun on the weaker side.

Armed with these two options, 3-2 or 2-3, much energy has been devoted to the debate of whether a song should be played in 3-2 clave or in 2-3 clave. In order for this to be settled and before any dissection can begin, it is important to realize that in the case of every Cuban song, before there was a melody, there was clave. A good Cuban composer will instinctively consider the clave while composing the melody. The two ideas are inseparable in the mind of the composer, and natural melodic and/or harmonic stress will be written into the melody to organically coincide with the clave. So,
according to the melody, the pattern will resemble either strong-weak (highlighting a 3-2) pattern or weak-strong (highlighting a 2-3). The pattern as a whole exists with these two opposing sides, and the natural feel of the melody determines on which side the clave should begin—creating a strong-weak pattern or a weak-strong pattern. Either way, the clave is still present and the partnership of weak to strong constantly exists. As an interpreter of this composer’s melody, to see forensically which clave pattern would fit best, it is therefore necessary to refer to the harmonic and rhythmic progression (and to a lesser extent, the harmonic implications) of said melody: to determine where the moments of harmonic and rhythmic strength fall in each measure and then align the literal or implied clave pattern.

From a practical standpoint, the decision of whether to play in 3-2 or 2-3 is a crucial one. If chosen incorrectly it affects the entire ensemble and disrupts the feel or the flow of the music. Cuban composer and musicologist Emilio Grenet explains this idea in the introduction to his 1939 publication *Música popular cubana*:

This adaptation of the melodic concept to the rhythmic pattern is manifested in such a manner that the change of a measure in the percussion produces such a notorious discrepancy between the melody and the rhythm that it becomes unbearable to the ears accustomed to our music.10

It is interesting to note, however, that although Grenet mentions the claves as an instrument in his introductory essay, he does not associate the term clave with the rhythmic concept. That association comes later, during the 1940s.11 This speaks to the idea that the clave rhythm, as a concept, was indeed innate in Cuban composers and

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10 Ibid. English translation by Ned Sublette. For the complete quote in its original Spanish, refer to Appendix B.

performers and, although discussed and implemented, was not even officially named until it took on the identity of the instrument that plays it.

It is also interesting to note that, as much emphasis as is put on the 3-2 versus the 2-3 clave “controversy,” it seems to be a concern invented by Americans. Granted, it is vitally important that the percussionist play “in clave,” but to distinguish, or even state that a song is either in 3-2 or 2-3 is not a Cuban concept. Changuito, the famed Cuban percussionist who played with the group Los Van Van, summarizes this idea in a very concise way: “There’s no such thing as 3-2 clave or 2-3 clave, there’s just clave.”

From this it is to be concluded that, based on the song, musicians only have to decide on which side of the clave they need to start, not which pattern they are going to play. The difficulty becomes then, for a non-Cuban musician (or, more specifically, one to whom these rhythmic ideas are not organic), to find a reliable way of accurately choosing and executing the pattern, which requires less of an instruction from a rulebook and more of a sense of the “groove” of the music. It is for this reason, and for a non-Cuban audience, that a more detailed explanation of how to correctly decipher and ultimately play the clave rhythm will be specified in this essay (the concentration of which occurs in Chapters 7 and 8, where Electo Silva’s arrangements are discussed in detail).

To add to the complexity of this issue, a song may or may not be exclusively in one pattern or the other. It is very common to switch from 3-2 to 2-3 within a song (or vice versa) and there are certain conditions where this is expected. For example, in the genres of folk or popular music, it is customary to perform the former in 2-3 and the latter

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12 Dictated by the author from a lecture given by University of Miami professor Fred Wickstrom on January 6, 2010, recounting a masterclass given by Changuito (born José Luis Quintana, 1948) on the University of Miami campus in the early 1980s.
in 3-2.\textsuperscript{13} And in the genre of \textit{son}, the verses are usually written in 3-2 but during the \textit{montuno}\textsuperscript{14} section the \textit{clave} feel switches to 2-3.\textsuperscript{15} In order to switch from one side of the \textit{clave} to the other, the transition must maintain the rhythmic integrity, or symmetry, of the pattern. In other words, in order to align the implied \textit{clave} of the melody, the melodic line must either anticipate, or be delayed because of, the already existent \textit{clave} pattern. This allows for the seamless continuity of the underlying clave rhythm, while in effect switching the emphasis to accommodate any changes in the inherent clave implication of the melody.

Conversely, repeating one side or the other in a transition (i.e. playing two “three sides” when going from 2-3 to 3-2 or two “two sides” when going from 3-2 to 2-3) is called “breaking \textit{clave},” and, unless done on purpose for a specific effect, is discouraged. “Some claim that breaking \textit{clave} is occasionally necessary for musical purposes. Others dispute this assertion, seeing it as an example of ignorance, simply inferior writing, and/or arranging.”\textsuperscript{16}

Regarding claves\textsuperscript{17} as instruments, the two sticks are played holding one in each hand. One hand is cupped, cradling one of the two claves, creating a resonating chamber. The other hand uses the second clave to strike the first on or near its center, producing a loud, piercing sound, intended to be heard above all the other instruments in the

\textsuperscript{13} The author recognizes the over-generalization made by this statement and that many exceptions to this observation exist.

\textsuperscript{14} The \textit{montuno} is an improvisation-based segment in the standard form of the \textit{son} genre. For more about the \textit{montuno}, refer to Chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{15} For more on the \textit{son}, refer to Chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{16} Peñalosa, \textit{The Clave Matrix}, 149.

\textsuperscript{17} Throughout this essay, when referring to the rhythmic pattern, the word “clave” will be italicized. When referring to the instrument, it will not.
ensemble. There are two main styles of claves available: Cuban and Afro-Cuban. The Cuban claves are about seven inches long and identical in length and diameter (the clavijas referenced above). The Afro-Cuban claves are more in line with the African folkloric tradition of male and female gender in paired instruments. The stationary clave is larger and hollowed out, representing the macho (masculine) and the second, smaller and solid clave, representing the hembra (feminine), is struck against it. When playing Cuban music, however, neither version of the claves (instrument) is necessary in order for the clave (rhythm) to be present. The instrument is only a conduit through which the rhythmic element is heard and that facilitates the joining of the polyrhythms present in Cuban ensembles. Other instruments in the group can and do play this rhythm in lieu of, or in addition to, the claves. The clave is a feeling and a force that drives the music forward, implied even if the five-stroke pattern is not being played.
Música guajira is a broad term that applies to music from the rural areas of Cuba named for the guajiros, a term used to identify Cuban farmers and workers who migrated from Spain (specifically Andalusia and the Canary Islands). Música guajira refers to music played by the inhabitants of the countryside, and under this large umbrella of campesino (rural) music many variations and intertwined sub-genres can be found that have influenced several other areas of Cuban music.

The main genre under the category of música guajira is the punto. This form is sung by a soloist and is firmly rooted in its literary foundation, the décima, providing a specific structure around which text and accompaniment are based. The décima is an historic literary form that flourished in Latin America and can be traced as far back as fifteenth-century Spain. It is a poem with ten octosyllabic lines and a fixed rhyme scheme: “abba ac cdce.” The brilliance of the décima lies in the fact that although the rhyme scheme is predetermined, the specific text of each is entirely improvised. The

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18 The term guajiro is a phonetic combination of the English words “war hero.” It refers to the residents of the Cuban countryside who fought in the Spanish-American War of 1898. This war was officially fought between the United States and the Spanish colonies, including, at that time, the island of Cuba. The campesinos, or rural inhabitants of Cuba, were an integral part of the infantry fighting with the United States against the Spanish for independence. The Cubans received very little public or formal recognition for their contribution but were highly revered on their own soil. This conflict is still called the Spanish-American War, but on San Juan Hill in Santiago de Cuba, a prominent battle site of the war, there are relics and tributes to the brave guajiros who gave their lives for freedom in the Spanish-Cuban-American War of 1898.

19 The punto is also referred to as the punto guajiro or punto cubano.
subject matter ranges from stories about the joys and difficulties of daily peasant life to themes about the landscape and the beautiful countryside. The first two lines are called the *punto* (the point) and establish the theme or topic of the poem. This, combined with the pointillistic guitar technique (referred to as *punteado*) used to accompany the poet, is what gives this important and influential genre its name.

An instrumental introduction exists prior to the first stanza, and instrumental interludes are inserted after the first and prior to the final quatrain. The guitar and several other similar Cuban instruments dominate the traditional accompaniment for the punto: the *tres*, the *laúd*, the *bandurria*, and the *tiple*. Joining this group are the claves and the *güiro* or *guayo*.

This genre is of Spanish descent, but the melodies of the *punto* are primarily syllabic, unlike the traditional melismatic Spanish *romance*. The meter oscillates between 6/8 and 3/4, and the tonality of the melodies (called *tonadas*) is usually modal,

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20 Performers of the *punto* are referred to as poets instead of singers, placing emphasis on the importance of the text and not the melody.

21 *Tres*: A small guitar with three pairs of strings instead of six separate ones. Used most often with the *punto* and the *son*.

22 *Laúd*: A small guitar with six pairs of strings instead of twelve separate ones, with more of a pear-shaped body instead of the hourglass shape of a guitar.

23 *Bandurria*: Similar to the *laúd*, with twelve strings tuned in pairs, and a pear-shaped body.

24 *Tiple*: A small *bandurria*.

25 *Güiro*: Made from a hollowed-out gourd, the cylindrical body is held in one hand while played with the other. It is etched with equidistant grooves that when scratched with a rod or scraper, create a raspy sound.

26 *Guayo*: A metal cylinder with tiny protuberances, scratched in a rhythmic fashion with a rod or scraper, similar to the *güiro*.

taking on characteristics of a Mixolydian or in some cases Phrygian (*tonadas españolas*) mode. Each phrase ends on the dominant rather than the tonic (or modal final), allowing the *décima* the ability to be continued indefinitely, depending on the desires of the poet.

The two predominant types of *punto* are the *punto fijo* and the *punto libre*. The *punto fijo* (fixed) is based in the central provinces of Cuba and has also been associated with the province of Camagüey farther east. For this variant of the *punto* the poet maintains a regular meter and tempo; a steady accompaniment pattern is used that continues during the vocal sections without stopping. For this reason it is also called the *punto en clave*, because the *clave* remains constant throughout the performance. The *punto libre* (free) from the western provinces of Havana and Pinar del Ríó is more flexible; the accompaniment is not played during the vocal portions. The *décimas* are sung in a less restricted manner with more elaborate melodies, “with punctuating metered instrumental ritornellos in alternating bars of 6/8 and 3/4...with a single fairly standardized chordal, and to some extent, melodic pattern.”

The *guajira* is another genre that falls under the broad category of *música guajira*. The *guajira* has evolved, like all genres and more specifically all folk music, and has taken two main forms during its development. The earliest derivation became a type of song that also uses the *décima*, but is not as defined by it, as in the case of the *punto*. This early version of the *guajira* is divided into two sections: the first in minor (a derivation of the original Phrygian mode from the *punto*) and the second in major (a derivation of the original Mixolydian mode). The rhythm alternates each measure

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28 Ibid., 139.
between 6/8 and 3/4 time. Like the punto, the cadences are mostly on the dominant with a Mixolydian tonality, and the text centers around themes of peasant life.

The quintessential example of this type of guajira is *El arroyo que murmura* (The Stream that Murmurs) by Jorge Anckermann, who because of this composition was considered the creator of the guajira.²⁹ Anckermann (1877-1941) was a Cuban pianist, violinist, and composer who spent most of his life on the island. He composed in dozens of the Cuban genres and wrote over 1,100 pieces in his lifetime. He became very well known for writing zarzuelas and other music for the theater and was even orchestra director for many of the theatres in Havana.³⁰ This special theater-style guajira began when there was a demand for productions about the Cuban countryside, which gave rise to this modification of the punto.

*El arroyo que murmura* was composed in 1899 for a production in Havana and began a romanticization of the countryside and of peasant living.³¹ Although blazing a trail toward a new type of music, Anckermann’s pioneer guajira follows much of the standard characteristics of a punto. It is written in two sections, the first in minor and the second in major, with a rhythm that alternates between 6/8 and 3/4. Most cadences are in the dominant, and the text is a true décima, following all the necessary syllabic and rhyme structures, as indicated in table 1. The text was written by Gustavo Robreño, a famous literary figure of the time who wrote many of the lyrics for Anckermann’s

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³¹ Manuel, “The Guajira between Cuba and Spain,” 149-150.
works. He penned a décima that fits the rhyme scheme through two complete cycles of the “abba ac cdcd” pattern, so that Anckermann was able to create two entire verses. The B section of the song (the section in major) begins after the first complete quatrain (abba) and starts the second section of text with the couplet (ac). At first glance it might appear that some lines do not conform to the eight syllables required but in fact have too many. This is a false perception and ignores the customary practice in Spanish-language lyrics and Cuban dialogue of eliding some syllable pairs together (linking the end of one word with the beginning of the next). The necessary elisions are indicated in table 1.  

Table 1. Verses 1 and 2 of *El arroyo que murmura* with syllable elision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 1</th>
<th>Verse 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El arroyo que murmura y que la luna retrata,</td>
<td>Escarba la codorniz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cuando sus rayos de plata atraviesan la espesura.</td>
<td>al pie de los altos glínes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El sinsonte de voz pura que alegra el monte y el llano,</td>
<td>y cantan los tomeguines,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la palma del verde guano que al son del viento se mece,</td>
<td>en las gabias del maíz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y que murmurar parece: es es el punto cubano.</td>
<td>Se agazapa la perdiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bajo el fondoso macio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>el vigilante judío</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>por todo el potrero vuela,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>y canta la gallinuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>en las márgenes del río.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Performances of *El arroyo que murmura* were not limited to the stage but also were very popular in salons, pubs, public squares, and on the radio. There were many

32 Giro, *Diccionario enciclopédico de la música en Cuba, Tomo 1*, 56.

33 For the English translation of these verses refer to Appendix C. For Electo Silva’s arrangement of *El arroyo que murmura*, refer to Appendix E.
versions created of this piece as the years passed, but the most well-known was that of Guillermo Portabales (1911-1970). Portabales’ rendition, delivered in his famously lyrical voice and with his trademark calm and soothing guitar accompaniment, catapulted Anckermann’s 1899 creation into the fame that it received into the twentieth century, long after more sophisticated forms of the genre had been developed.

The guajira, despite its popularity at the turn of the century, fell out of favor by the 1940s. This only necessitated a revamping of the style, however, and not its dissolution. This natural evolution of the guajira still kept its acoustic, rural flair, and still loosely used the décima structure, while the themes of the text continued to depict the rustic serenity of peasant life. The meter shifted from its original compound duple and simple triple (6/8 followed by 3/4) combined pattern to common time. The changes gave the new guajira a more popular, urban flavor with a syncopated feel that resembled the Cuban son.34

The best-known example of this new version, and arguably the best-known Cuban song of all time, is Guajira guantanamera, credited to Joseito Fernández. The song has a long and complicated history, and there are many contradicting accounts about its inception. Its true origin is unclear, but in 192835 Joseito Fernández composed the refrain of the piece: “Guantanamera, Guajira guantanamera...” on his daily radio program El suceso del día (The event of the day) on CMQ radio in Havana. Quoted from a 1972 magazine article entitled “El sonido de la semana” (The sound of the week), Fernández relays the origin of this phenomenon:

34 Manuel, “The Guajira between Cuba and Spain,” 152.

35 One of the contradictions about the origin of this piece is its date of composition. Peter Manuel says it was in 1940, Radamés Giro and Leonardo Depestre, in their respective sources, say it was 1928.
The *Guajira guantanamera* came into being long before the “radio news” with the *Guantanamera*, on CMQ, and without me ever suspecting it would become world-famous. I worked in a radio station, singing this melody with whatever name: girl from Camagüey, girl from Pinar del Río. It was a girl from Guantanamo that was in love with me, but was very jealous. She brought me flan, little things to eat, because then they didn’t pay very much and ¡pasábamos un hambre! (We were so hungry!) That day she surprised me [when I was] speaking to another girl and she was angry, and, worst of all, she took the bread and steak she had brought me...Then I grabbed the microphone and I sang like never before: “*Guajira guantanamera*” She returned right away and, the public began to call and to write that they liked it. And that’s how it stayed.\(^\text{36}\)

With the chorus now cemented as a “tribute” to Joseito’s favorite jealous peasant girl, the topics of the verses became more and more elaborate. Beginning first with sagas about relationships, they quickly expanded into a vehicle through which daily news and stories from the community could be passed on to the listeners of CMQ radio all over the country. In keeping with the *campesino* tradition, and feeding the novelty of the process, these verses were always in *décima* form, and then interspersed with the refrain “*Guajira guantanamera*...” It was incredibly popular and because of the far-reaching power of radio, its rise to fame was almost instantaneous.

As a result, Joseito Fernández enjoyed tremendous fame and was named *El Rey de la Melodía* (The King of Melody). In 1942 the United States’ Embassy in Cuba issued an edict from The Secretary of State in Washington that Fernández was the sole composer of that melody and that it should not be for commercial use, and that the rights belonged to him.\(^\text{37}\) Following that in 1943, the Orquesta de Joseito was given exclusive

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\(^{37}\) The intervention of the United States government in this matter is worth noting since it seems as if it should have been the Cuban government who executed such a decree and not that of the United States. When Cuba gained independence from Spain in 1898, it fell into the temporary hands of the U.S. who did
rights to be the only group allowed to play the piece on Radio CMQ for the next fourteen years.\textsuperscript{38} There were countless recordings made of the song throughout the island in different versions after the copyright given to the Orquesta de Joseíto expired, which of course contributed to its popularity and its association with the “common people” of Cuba. It was as if it became an anthem. Joseíto Fernández retired from radio CMQ in 1960 and died in 1979 at the age of seventy-one.

The popularity of \textit{Guajira guantanamera} was not limited to the island of Cuba. On June 8, 1963, American folksinger Pete Seeger performed a concert in Carnegie Hall, premiering his adaptation of the Cuban folk tune. Seeger (b. 1919) is arguably one of the most famous folksingers of the twentieth century, and this song helped launch him to superstar status. Seeger was more than a performer—he was a peace activist as well. In 1942 he was drafted into the Army but after his return he resumed his position on the folk music scene, recording such hits as “Turn, Turn, Turn,” “If I Had a Hammer,” (made famous by Peter Paul and Mary), and “Wimoweh (The Lion Sleeps Tonight).” His involvement with Joseíto Fernández’ classic was not the first time he chose to adapt a song of the people that resulted in that song’s immense popularity. He also had a hand in a gospel song from the Civil Rights movement, “We Shall Overcome,” and marched alongside Martin Luther King, Jr. in Selma, Alabama. It was during this same decade not want the country to fall prey to another malicious power in its vulnerable and newly independent state. After four years of occupation, the Platt amendment was ratified that granted the United States permission to intervene on behalf of Cuba’s economic or political well-being (and also allowed the U.S. to set up a naval base in the country). This was in place until nullified in 1934 by the signing of the Treaty of Relations Act by General Fulgencio Batista and Franklin Roosevelt as part of Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy. This began a lengthy period of benevolent relations between the two countries and continued to allow military and economic assistance when necessary.

\textsuperscript{38} Depestre, \textit{Joseito Fernández y su guantanamera}, 8-9.
that his concert in Carnegie Hall took place, which was recorded and released on an album bearing the name of that significant gospel song, “We Shall Overcome.”

On the program was also his version (and the North American debut) of Fernández’ legacy. Seeger encountered the song for the first time during the summer of 1961 when he paid a visit to Camp Woodland in Constantia, New York. During that time one of the camp’s main focuses was to engage students in activities that helped teach them about folk traditions. To this end, Camp Woodland’s music director Héctor Angulo led a children’s choir that sang the Guajira guantanamera with verses by José Martí. Seeger was immediately enamored with the song and he chose to follow in Angulo’s footsteps, substituting excerpts of a collection of short poems called Versos Sencillos of José Martí. Singing in both English and Spanish, he alternated the refrain with these verses for his New York City performance. Seeger was quoted saying that it was unclear whether the idea of the use of Martí’s words was that of Héctor Angulo or Angulo’s teacher, Julián Orbón, but Seeger’s choice to use this for his adaptation began an American fascination with not only the tune of the Guajira guantanamera but


41 Héctor Angulo (b. 1932), guitarist and composer from the Cuban province of Villa Clara who worked extensively with folk genres.

42 Julián Orbón (1925-1991) was a decorated Spanish composer who lived in Cuba from 1940-1960. In 1960 he moved to Mexico and decided not to return to Cuba, at which point his musical influence was downplayed considerably on the island. His accomplishments both in and outside those borders, however, were extensive. He studied with Aaron Copland in 1945 and taught at the National Conservatory in Mexico City until 1963, when he relocated to New York. (Summarized from the New York Times obituary of Julián Orbón, printed May 23, 1991)
consequently the life and work of José Martí, at that point relatively unknown in the United States. 43

José Martí (1853-1895) was a Havana-born writer and a revolutionary, constantly yearning for Cuba’s freedom from Spanish rule. His writings drew much attention from both sides of the law, causing him not only to be praised but also to be jailed and exiled. Active with both his pen and his time, after many years of protest, he helped organize an invasion of Cuba to realize the dream of an island released from slavery and oppression. This insurgency was not successful, and Martí was killed during the Battle of Dos Ríos (Two Rivers), one of the first battles of this effort. Cuba would not be independent until the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898. Martí, however, has become one of the most famous Cubans of all time. He is praised for his passion, dedication, and commitment to human rights, rectifying civil injustices, and an expression of love and acceptance.

His talent for poetry was what helped to convey these ideas to the public, and no doubt it was these values that most attracted Seeger to his words. The two men shared the same ideals and love for mankind, and it is only logical that Martí’s Versos Sencillos be used to complete Joseíto Fernández’ iconic contribution to the musical folklore of Cuba, and that Seeger, along with so many others, was so willing to incorporate them into his version as well.

Written in 1891 during José Martí’s years in New York (1891-1895), the collection known as Versos Sencillos is extensive. It is divided into forty-six sections, distinguished by Roman numerals, each containing a varying number of four-line stanzas.

43 Iraida Olivia, La guantanamera (Havana, Cuba: Editorial José Martí, 1999), 142; Depestre Joseíto Fernández y su guantanamera, 11.
Some sections contain only two stanzas but others as many as sixteen.\(^{44}\) In an introduction by the author himself, the poems are described as “*versos del corazón*” (verses of the heart),\(^{45}\) and are impassioned with the conviction of this historic martyr. Although the stanzas are only four lines in length, as opposed to the ten required by the form of the *décima*, their syllabic content is what makes these poems a perfect fit for the *Guajira guantanamera*. Each line has exactly eight syllables, the same number as required in each line of a *décima*, used in Fernández’ original version. Martí’s frequent rhyme scheme of “abba” also contributes to the ease of their insertion for Héctor Angulo and Julián Orbón, and finally Pete Seeger in Carnegie Hall in 1963.

Seeger’s fascination and connection with the *Guajira guantanamera* was not limited to this New York City concert. It became one of his greatest hits, and he performed it for civil rights rallies, protests, and concerts all over the country. He even traveled to Cuba in 1971 to meet Joseíto Fernández (at that time, age sixty-three), and for this occasion, Fernández composed a special verse:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Pete Seeger yo te saludo} \\
\text{en nombre de los cubanos,} \\
\text{Pete Seeger yo te saludo} \\
\text{en nombre de los cubanos} \\
\text{y de todos los hermanos} \\
\text{que sufren trabajos duros.}^{46}
\end{align*}
\]

Although Seeger was the first to perform and record this classic in the United States, because of his popularity, the song caught on and was subsequently recorded

\(^{44}\) Nearly all forty-six sections conform to this four-line stanza but a few contain strophes of eight or more lines.


\(^{46}\) Olivia, *La guantanamera*, 117.

“Pete Seeger I greet you / in the name of Cubans, / Pete Seeger I greet you / in the name of Cubans / and of all the brothers / that endure difficult jobs”
countless times by American artists as well as those around the world. The most famous rendition after Seeger’s was that of The Sandpipers, a popular folk group of the 1960s, but the folk genre was not the only one to inspire covers of this song, and as time passed, bands and individuals from every conceivable area of music tried their hand at this tune.⁴⁷ Each version takes on its own identity and the practices of improvisation or the use of Versos Sencillos are equally employed. The flexibility of using Martí’s poetry lies in its length, and therefore in the numerous choices one has when selecting which stanzas to use. This works brilliantly with the original purpose of the Guajira guantanamera, wherein Fernández created a way to be personally expressive in the verses, and to communicate with his audience. This avenue of expression still exists, and the individuality and creativity of various performers are revealed in the selected verses of their performance. In this way the spirit of the song’s inception, continued by Pete Seeger and others, is still in practice today.

⁴⁷ Versions consulted include more classic versions by José Feliciano or Celia Cruz but also a rendition by a quartet of Japanese women, and a collaboration of Reggae rapper Wyclef Jean and the Fugees.
CHAPTER 4

THE BOLERO

Dating from the last third of the nineteenth century, the Cuban bolero is one of the most beloved genres of the island’s culture, and one that permeated not only the Caribbean but the whole of Latin America with its popularity. Initial confusion concerning its origin arises due to another genre of the same name but of different geographical derivation, the Spanish bolero, whose similarities to the Cuban bolero are restricted to name only.

The ancestry of the Spanish bolero can be traced as far back as 1780 in Andalusia, Spain. A popular form of dance music said to have been invented by dancer Sebastián Cerezo, it is performed most often by a pair of dancers (only occasionally by a single one) and influenced heavily by the seguidilla. The Spanish bolero is in 3/4 time, has a relatively fast tempo, and contains three sections (AAB). The dance is accompanied by guitars, with the dancers themselves playing castanets, singing, and gesturing with the traditional bien parado.49

48 The seguidilla is a Spanish folk dance, varying in style depending on the region. It is a couple dance, during which the pair uses “small springing steps, light foot stamps, and varied ground patterns.” The term can also refer to a popular verse form in Spanish folk song, using “improvised verses of love or satire” known as coplas, within quatrains of a specific syllabic pattern and rhyme scheme. Encyclopædia Britannica 2009 Online, "Seguidilla," http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9066608 (accessed October 22, 2009).

The Cuban bolero is more closely related to African dance rhythms and Cuban melodic styles than to the Spanish bolero. Performed in duple meter (most often 2/4, in contrast to the Spanish bolero in 3/4) in a moderately slow tempo, the bolero features passionate lyrics and memorable melodies. Accompanied in its earliest forms only by the guitar, the strummed rhythms (rasgueos) contrast with the melodic line and create a driving force of intensity beneath it. The rhythmic interest of the bolero comes first from the clave, but two main supplementary rhythms enhance this most basic of all Cuban pulses, rhythms that are often present in both the accompaniment and the melody. These are the cinquillo and the tresillo, shown in figures 4.1 and 4.2, respectively. Figure 4.1 shows the two most commonly-found ways the cinquillo is notated. On a macro level, because each complete pattern is contained in one entire measure, these rhythms are not truly considered syncopated, since the strongest part of each pattern occurs on the strongest part of the measure. The syncopation, however, comes from fitting an odd number of notes into an even-numbered beat pattern. Each rhythm is a derivative of the clave, and, as their names would suggest, the cinquillo combines five notes into the time of four, the tresillo, three into the time of two. The tresillo is identical to, and the cinquillo is an elaborated derivation of, the “three side” of the clave.

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50 For more information on the clave, refer to Chapter 2.

51 The second stroke of the tresillo is called the bombo and the third stroke is called the ponche.
The origin of the word “bolero” is uncertain, and several theories exist. Referencing the speed of the dance steps and footwork of the Spanish bolero, it is thought that the word comes from the verb *volar* (to fly). The change of the first letter is attributed to the fact that the “v” in Spanish is softened, sounding like a mix between “b” and “v”.52 Another idea comes from Gypsy fashion jargon, where a “bolero” refers to a finishing detail on a woman’s blouse or jacket, such as a ruffle or appliqué.53 While neither theory can be officially documented, the former is more widely accepted than the latter.

Ancestral genres of the Cuban bolero are the *habanera*, the *canción*, and the *trova*. The *habanera*, according to author Faustino Núñez, is a genre whose origins are impossible to trace because it contains influences from many different styles of music. These influences include the tango of Argentina, the *pasodoble* of Spain, and even the phenomenon of “ragtime” in the United States.54 The *habanera* is based on a rhythmic *ostinato* in 2/4 (as shown in figure 4.3), settled in Havana (getting its name from the Spanish translation of Cuba’s capital: *La Habana*) in the eighteenth century, and was used for both dancing and singing. It is considered, along with several other Cuban


54 Radamés Giro, *Diccionario enciclopédico de la música en Cuba, Tomo 2* (Havana, Cuba: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2007), 228.
genres such as the bolero and the rumba, as a “género de ida y vuelta” (round-trip genre) because it came to Cuba from somewhere else, was developed further on the island, and then was exported back to other neighboring countries in its newly modified state. This is why some Cuban music scholars argue that the habanera is chronologically, as well as rhythmically, the foundation of and a tremendous influence for the tango. The habanera song form was used by many Cuban composers, and its compositional structure, containing an introduction followed by two sixteen-measure groups, was mimicked in part by the canción and the bolero.

Figure 4.3. Habanera

The canción (song) is a genre originating in Spain, influenced by Spanish popular forms as well as European characteristics from the Italian aria, French romanza, Neapolitan song, and the waltz. The canción was a precursor of the bolero, but then later modified by it, another example of a género de ida y vuelta. A song form of the rural population, its European version evolved from a triple meter into duple (3/4 into 2/4) and began to take on the “tropical lassitude and melodic sensuality” of the bolero by way of its “anacrases, deceptive cadences” and eventually its “distinctively Cuban lyrics.” Also because of European influences, the lyrics became less about amorous

55 Orovio, Cuban Music from A to Z, 42.
56 Ibid., 43.
love and more about patriotism. Using descriptive imagery about palm trees, landscapes, and the women of the countryside, the canción now had an underlying purpose, aside from its lyrical beauty: to portray a love of country. Originally a solo song, it was often performed as a duet, with the melody harmonized in thirds and sixths accompanied by the guitar.\textsuperscript{57} This formula became a blueprint for Cuban folkloric music in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and standardized this configuration in future folk and popular genres, specifically for the trova and eventually the bolero.

The third ancestral genre of the bolero, the trova, is a genre of Cuban music in a folk style that gets its name from the trovadores, traveling singer/songwriters who informed the townspeople of the news of the day and entertained passersby with their original compositions played on the guitar. Following the medieval French tradition of the troubadours and trouvères centuries earlier, these talented poets flourished in Santiago de Cuba during the early and middle portions of the nineteenth century. In addition to their original texts, the trovadores also used the words of famous poets as the basis for their compositions, often composing in the form of the décima, as was the custom for other rural genres like the punto cubano and the guajira.\textsuperscript{58}

José “Pepe” Sánchez (1856-1918) was considered one of the most famous of the trovadores. Although he had no formal musical training, his skills as a composer and guitarist brought him into the forefront of this genre. In keeping with the tradition of the trovadores, most of his songs were not written down, and therefore few survive, but his 1883 composition entitled Tristezas (Sadness) contained subtle differences and nuances

\textsuperscript{57} Argeliers León, \textit{Música folklórica cubana} (Havana, Cuba: Ediciones del Departamento de la Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, 1964), 99.

\textsuperscript{58} For more on these concepts, refer to Chapter 3.
that separated it from the other compositions of the time, and it is credited as being the first bolero. Sánchez combined the poetic verse forms (most often quatrains) with the cinquillo and tresillo rhythmic patterns, and also standardized the phrase lengths to be two periods of sixteen measures, with an instrumental interlude referred to as a pasacalle.  Although there were many contributions to the standardization of this genre, Tristezas codified what would become one of the most popular genres in all of Cuban music.

The bolero, in either a major or minor mode (or alternating between the two), originated as a serenade performed beneath window terraces of Santiago de Cuba and as entertainment in plazas and on street corners. Its form, like that of its predecessors, contains two sixteen-measure periods with an instrumental interlude between them. The main rhythmic idea, as shown in figure 4.4, is very similar to the habanera and is easily supplemented by the cinquillo or tresillo as mentioned in figures 4.1 and 4.2, respectively.

Figure 4.4. Bolero

Expanding from a solo genre, duos and trios performed boleros in pubs and restaurants (called Casas de la Trova), contributing to the local popularity of the genre.

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59 Orovio, Diccionario de la música cubana, 50.
Pepe Sánchez and others such as Sindo Garay traveled from Oriente\textsuperscript{60} to Havana and infused the western capital with the sounds of the bolero, causing a national sensation. Antonio Gumersindo Garay García (1867-1968) studied guitar with Sánchez and performed with him throughout the eastern provinces of Cuba. He traveled back and forth to Havana around the turn of the century, working with many famous composers of the day and gaining popularity, and in the 1920s and 30s visited countries including France, Costa Rica, and Mexico. A talented guitarist and composer, Garay was known for his boleros. Going beyond the tonal expectations of the genre, he often explored thick chromaticism, citing Wagner as a major influence. His songs are famous for the use of generous amounts of \textit{rubato}\textsuperscript{61}.

Although the Spanish version of the bolero is the elder of the two, the Cuban bolero was the version that broke free of the boundaries of the island and conquered Latin America. With its birthplace in the port city of Santiago de Cuba, the dissemination of this genre was very simple and perhaps inevitable. Composer Eusebio Delfín’s international hit from 1921 \textit{Y ¿tú, qué has hecho?} (And You, What Have You Done?), also known by its first line: “\textit{En el tronco de un árbol}” (On the trunk of a tree), secured the popularity of this genre well into the twentieth century. As evidenced by this song, Delfín (1893-1965) changed the way boleros were accompanied. He exchanged the full strumming patterns (\textit{rasgueados}, shown in figure 4.5) for broken arpeggios (\textit{punteados},

\textsuperscript{60} Oriente is the most eastern province of Cuba, containing its second largest city, Santiago de Cuba. Nestled in the Sierra Maestra Mountains and founded by Cuba’s first governor, Diego Velázquez in 1514, it served as the island’s capital until 1553. Encyclopædia Brittanica 2009 Online, "Santiago de Cuba," http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9065635 (accessed October 22, 2009).

\textsuperscript{61} Giro, \textit{Diccionario enciclopédico de la música en Cuba, Tomo 2}, 132-134.
shown in figure 4.6) and inserted silences into the weaker parts of the rhythmic patterns, altering the harmony.\footnote{Ibid., 15. For Electo Silva’s arrangement of \textit{Y ¿tú, qué has hecho?}, refer to Appendix E. For an English translation of the text, refer to Appendix C.}

Figure 4.5. \textit{El Rasgueado}

![Figure 4.5. El Rasgueado](image)

Figure 4.6. \textit{El Punteado} from Delfín’s \textit{Y ¿tú, qué has hecho?}\footnote{This example is notated exactly as it appears in Radamés Giro’s \textit{Diccionario enciclopédico de la música en Cuba}. The dotted-half notes in the bottom staff of the example, however, are harmonically inconsistent with the example. The correct notes in measures one and two should be A and C#, not G# and B, as printed by Giro.}

![Figure 4.6. El Punteado](image)

Further evolution of the genre was marked by hybrid forms that began to emerge in the late 1920s and 1930s. Pioneering this expansion was the Trío Matamoros, a group formed by composer Miguel Matamoros (1894-1971) in 1925. The other two members of the group, Rafael Cueto (1900-1991) and Siro Rodríguez (1899-1981), were also noted
composers. Matamoros’ popular song Lágrimas negras (Black Tears) was a bolero-son, combining the two genres and setting a new standard for the possibilities of the bolero.64

The bolero quickly gained popularity in Mexico, and much of the evolution of the genre can be credited to Mexican composers and performers. As the bolero grew, it was no longer accompanied exclusively by the guitar. Solos became duets, duets made their way into trios, and before long the guitar was replaced by larger and larger groups of instruments. When accompanying themselves, soloists used the guitar and piano most often. But it was not long before singers were using more complete conjuntos,65 bandas gigantes, and orquestas66 as accompaniment for this growing style of music.

Undergoing many changes throughout the nineteenth, twentieth, and even the twenty-first centuries, the bolero continues to be a respected genre of Cuban music. Its impact is not in complex harmonies or extensive rhythmic patterns but in the lyrics, and moreover, the passionate performances of the poetry. The bolero is perhaps the one genre that can best express the depth of emotion felt by Cubans about their lives, their land, and their people. Musicologist and composer Eduardo Sánchez de Fuentes perfectly captures this sentiment in his book El folk-lor en la música cubana:

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64 For more on the Trío Matamoros and the bolero-son, refer to Chapter 5; for more on Lágrimas negras, refer to Chapters 7 and 8.

65 Conjunto: Developed in the early 1940s as an expansion of the septet, the group played mostly sones and consisted of piano, double bass, bongo, congas, tres guitar, four trumpets, and three singers who sometimes also played maracas and claves.

66 Orquesta or orquesta típica: a predecessor of the conjunto and also referred to as a wind orchestra, it reached its highest level of popularity in the nineteenth century. This group contained a cornet, trombone á piston, ophicleide, two C-clarinets, two violins, a double bass, kettledrums (tympani), and güiro.
The bolero is the genre of song preferred by the people of Oriente for nocturnal serenades, listening to its passionate tones amidst the silence of our azure nights, beneath a sky overflowing with stars, as the dearest complaint of the romantic soul of Cuba.\footnote{67 Eduardo Sanchez de Fuentes, \textit{El folk-lor en la música cubana}. (Havana, Cuba: La Academia Nacional de Artes y Letras, 1923), 84. For the complete quote in its original Spanish, refer to Appendix B.}
CHAPTER 5

THE SON

Of the many genres of Cuban music, none exemplifies the mixture of Spanish and African cultures better than the son. The melodies and distinctive guitar accompaniments display the Spanish influence, while a particular set of percussion instruments and its rhythms show the influence of Africa. As well-known and wide-spread as it is, this genre’s origins are strongly debated and very difficult to discern. Despite the controversy surrounding the source of the son, its importance is undisputed.

In its most seminal form, the son is a genre that is both sung and danced and can be traced back to the contradanza, a fragment of the European dance suite. Originally referred to in England as the “country dance,” once it arrived on the island and was infused with the Cuban habanera rhythm,68 it was exported containing this new element in the later decades of the first half of the nineteenth century. In Europe Romanticism was in full force, but Cuba was still under the influence of Classical style. When Romanticism finally arrived on the island, the contradanza evolved into the danza, expanding its phrases and lengthening the habanera rhythmic ostinatos from once each bar to once every other bar, eventually paving the way for the complete, two-measure

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68 For more on the habanera refer to Chapter 4.
clave pattern (and its elaborated form containing the cinquillo). “This cinquillo pattern is an intrinsic and fundamental underpinning for the danzón.”69

The danzón is one of the few genres whose birth can be traced back to a single day. Miguel Failde wrote the first danzón, Las alturas de Simpson, premiering on January 1, 1879 at the Liceo de Matanzas.70 Inextricably linked to the habanera by definition, its form is more evolved than the habanera, and retains the traditional fast-slow-fast structure familiar to the Europeans.71 The danzón is written in 2/4 and begins with an eight-measure introduction, which is repeated to create a section containing sixteen measures. The second part is slower than the first; it is followed by a repeat of the introduction. This acts as a bridge to the final section, and the entire form concludes with a section in a faster tempo. This dance form often contains instrumental parts written to feature the brass section, and/or a solo clarinet, flute, or violin, and is designed to highlight the virtuosity of the players.72 In 1910 clarinetist and composer José Urfé (1879-1957) expanded the genre of the danzón with the third section of his El Bombín de Barreto. In this final portion he added more liberties for dancing and rhythmic freedom than had ever been allowed. This began to extend the reach of the genre from a salon dance to more of a street dance, and pushed beyond the boundaries of the upper class to the common folk of Cuba. These inventive ideas would eventually lead to what is now referred to as the montuno section of a son.

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69 Transcribed from a conversation with Raul Murciano by the author on October 30, 2009. For more on the cinquillo, refer to Chapter 4.

70 Orovio, Cuban Music from A to Z, 65.


72 Ibid.
While the European dance forms were being explored in the upper echelons of Havana, rural song forms with more African influence were taking hold in the clubs and on the street corners in the eastern areas of Guantánamo, Baracoa, Manzanillo, and Santiago de Cuba. Precursors of the son in this category are the changuí and the sucu-sucu.

The changuí, originating in Guantánamo, is a genre made popular on the sugarcane and coffee plantations. It is considered by some musicologists to be a variant of the son, but there is reason to believe it is instead a predecessor.\(^7^3\) The instrumentation of the changuí is led by the tres\(^7^4\) and does not include guitar or claves, which would be present in a traditional son. Providing stability in the accompaniment of the changuí is the marímbula\(^7^5\) or the botijuela,\(^7^6\) the bongo,\(^7^7\) and the guayo.\(^7^8\) “The absence of a fixed rhythmic pattern, underscored by the absence of the claves, is characteristic of the rural changuí. The tres has an essential role, with very segmented musical phrases and a

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\(^7^4\) Tres: A small guitar with three pairs of strings instead of six separate ones. Used most often with the punto and the son.

\(^7^5\) Marímbula: An instrument constructed with a hollowed-out box, over whose opening on one of its vertical faces protrudes several flat metal bars that are secured at one end. It is played by sitting atop the box and plucking or striking the bars by hand. Several notes are possible (depending on the number of bars) but the instrument is used in a bass function, therefore the dominant, subdominant, and tonic notes are most prominently played. It is said to have evolved from the African sansa or mbira (thumb piano).

\(^7^6\) Botijuela: A large jar with a hole in it, played by blowing into the hole and modifying the pitch with one hand; the botijuela can substitute for the marímbula.

\(^7^7\) Bongo: Small pair of drums with one pitched slightly higher than the other, attached at the center, used to fill out the higher registers.

\(^7^8\) Guayo: A metal cylinder with tiny protuberances, scratched in a rhythmic fashion with a rod or scraper.
constant dialogue with the bongó.”\textsuperscript{79} This eastern genre is based on a literary structure much like the décima of another rural genre, the punto guajiro. The call and response format of the changüí is the same as the punto, but instead of trading ten-lined sections, the singers use réginas, octosyllabic quatrains.\textsuperscript{80}

Adding to the ancestry of the son is the sucu-sucu, originating on the Isla de Pinos (Pine Island), now the Isla de Juventud (Island of Youth), the second-largest Cuban island, located south of Havana. “The term sucu-sucu describes a dance, a musical form, and the party at which the song and dance is performed.”\textsuperscript{81} The form contains similarities to the son montuno, containing both a call and response and an improvisatory section. Instrumentation for the sucu-sucu varies, with one combination more closely resembling the traditional son sexteto\textsuperscript{82} but allowing for additions and substitutions such as the accordion, violin, and harmonica, revealing the influence of immigrants from Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, or the bandurria\textsuperscript{83} instead of the tres and the machete\textsuperscript{84} instead of the guayo, revealing the influence of the people from the eastern regions of Cuba. When danced, the sucu-sucu is performed in pairs and displays many similarities to the

\textsuperscript{79} Roy, Cuban Music, 122.

\textsuperscript{80} For more on the punto refer to Chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{81} Orovio, Cuban Music from A to Z, 207.

\textsuperscript{82} A standard grouping of instruments for playing traditional Cuban music: tres, guitar, marimba, bongo, claves, and maracas.

\textsuperscript{83} Bandurria: A type of early guitar used in the eastern provinces of Cuba with twelve strings tuned in pairs, and a pear-shaped body.

\textsuperscript{84} “[A] machete is used against a knife as a scraper to create a regular rhythmic pattern” Orovio, Cuban Music from A to Z, 207. Found mostly in rural areas and often replaced by the guayo or güiro in more urban settings.
son choreography. The couple is intertwined, the man with one hand behind the
woman’s back and the other clasped in front.85

The basic son is a genre meant to be sung and danced, performed in 2/4. It begins
with a sung introduction followed by a call-and-response section that alternates between a
soloist and a choir. The two literary forms most followed in this call-and-response
section are either a couplet and a régina, used for the estribillo (refrain), or a more rapid
exchange using a one-sentence call by the soloist followed by a brief and repetitive
response by the choir, shown in table 2. The final section is known as the montuno
section, where the singers and the instrumentalists improvise. The name alludes to its
rural roots, referring to the people in the Sierra Maestra Mountains (montunos) where the
style originated. This elaborate montuno section is led by the instrumentalists and
punctuated by the singers, using fragments of estribillos and short energetic responses.
The clave rhythm changes from a 3-2 to a 2-3 pattern in the montuno section of the son.86

85 Orovio, Cuban Music from A to Z, 207.

86 For more on the clave and its use in the son, refer to Chapters 2 and 8, respectively.
Table 2. Call-and-response comparison of *El amor de mi caridad* \(^{87}\) and *El que siembra su maíz* \(^{88}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>El amor de mi caridad</th>
<th>El que siembra su maíz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choir:</strong></td>
<td><strong>La mujer en el amor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amor, amor, no hay amor de Caridad.</td>
<td>(soloist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amor, amor, no hay amor de Caridad.</td>
<td>¡si señor! (choir)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soloist:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me dijo a mi mamá:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ten presente, trovador,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>que en el mundo no hay amor,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no hay amor de Caridad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choir:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amor, amor, no hay amor de Caridad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amor, amor, no hay amor de Caridad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rhythmic pattern most identified with the *son* is the anticipated bass, shown in figure 5.1, and comprises a multitude of rhythmic patterns made by a myriad of instruments. This pattern puts emphasis on the last eighth note in each measure of 2/4, preempting the downbeat and creating a feeling of instability. This emphasized anacrusis can be ornamented or expanded upon, as well as transferred to different instruments, but never deviated from. This gives the *son* its anticipatory feel, as shown in figures 5.2-5.4.\(^{89}\)

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\(^{88}\) Miguel Matamoros, 1928. For more on *El que siembra su maíz*, refer to Chapters 7 and 8.

Figure 5.1. Anticipated bass

Figure 5.2. Anticipation shown in the top voice only

Figure 5.3. Anticipation shown in the lower voice only

Figure 5.4. Anticipation shown in both voices
The accompaniment for the *son* in its most basic and rural form includes a guitar, a *tres*, a *botijuela* or *marimbula*, claves, and *bongo*. The very earliest performers, however, called *bungas*, roamed around Santiago de Cuba and other eastern cities with only a guitar, a *tres*, and singers. The performing groups gradually expanded into quartets, having one player each for the stringed instruments, a *tres* and a guitar, one playing the *botijuela* or *marimbula* (the group would have either one or the other since both instruments serve the same function), and one playing the *bongo*. The claves would be played by the singer. As the groups became more urban, the double bass replaced the *botijuela* or *marimbula* because it was not as tonally limited, and was more easily heard over the other instruments in the group.

No controversy can rival the discussions surrounding which was the first *son* ever composed. Several Cuban music scholars site the *Son de la Ma’ Teodora* as the first *son*. This belief is based on an 1893 publication of Laureano Fuentes. Composed in the sixteenth century by two sisters from Santo Domingo, Teodora and Micaela Ginés, the piece contains a call-and-response section. Because this is a main defining element in the modern *son*, many scholars believe that this was the first. More supportive evidence of this theory is in the title, containing the word “*son*.” This could be an argument for either side, however, since *son* can also just mean “song.” But beyond nomenclature and broad similarities of form, little else supports the conclusion that the *Son de la Ma’ Teodora* is in fact the first *son*, and many musicologists doubt this theory, citing the correlation as a coincidence. Noted Cuban musicologist Radamés Giro, for instance, suggests the first *son* to be *Son de máquina* by Armando Romeu, a song also containing the structure of the

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*estribillo* (refrain) alternated with the *copla* (couplet), from the eastern regions of the island that “appeared at a very early date.”

There are several attributes that contribute to the international popularity of the *son*: location, the advent of recordings, and important and inventive performers. Considering its rural beginnings, and the musical history of the region, the blossoming of the *son* in the easternmost province of Oriente is logical, considering the number of musical genres that had their start there. How it spread throughout Cuba, and then to Latin America and beyond, however, is not immediately clear. One commonly-held theory about its arrival in the capital city of Havana is through the movement of the Ejército Permanente (Cuban army) in 1909. Giro again disagrees:

> Because of its simplicity, we cannot accept this affirmation, because, how is it possible that a military institution, whose function was not music, would be able to introduce the *son* in Havana? It is not enough to affirm that members of this armed body could include musicians, many of them performers of the *son*, more for economic than musical reasons. One cannot negate the contribution of the *Ejército Permanente* in the expansion of the *son* but it should not lead to the assertion that they brought it to Havana. It is more reasonable to say that the *son* arrived in the capital by way of the men that emigrated from their place of origin to other regions, including the capital.

Once the genre was a permanent fixture in Havana, its development was unstoppable. Quartets grew to sextets, most notably because of *tresero* Ricardo Martínez in 1918, who was directing the Cuarteto Oriental. He expanded the group into the Sexteto Habanero, using an instrumentation that would become standard: *tres*, guitar, *bongo*, *marimbula*, maracas, and claves. The group would become quite famous and by 1925 was recording albums with recording company Victor. These recordings were

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92 Ibid., 163. For the complete quote in its original Spanish, refer to Appendix B.
heard all over Cuba and Latin America and even made their way to the United States, beginning what would become a *son* phenomenon.⁹³

Another major contributing factor to the popularity of the *son* was the Trío Matamoros, established in 1925. The *sones* written by Miguel Matamoros are some of the most famous on record (*Son de la loma* 1922, *El que siembra su maíz* 1928), and his use of the hybrid genre *bolero-son*, as exemplified in *Lágrimas negras*, launched the group into international fame.⁹⁴ Their unique blend of voices and talent for songwriting joined with their experimentation with instruments, contributed to the evolution of the genre. Guitarists Matamoros and Rafael Cueto helped standardize a new *rasgueo* (strumming) pattern with the practice of hitting a hand against the guitar to emphasize the off-beats, and Siro Rodríguez played maracas or claves, as well as experimenting with other small percussion instruments.⁹⁵

The influence of the *son* came to the United States in the 1930s when artists like Ignacio Piñeiro and the Trío Matamoros traveled to New York to record albums and play in jazz clubs.⁹⁶ These visits were reciprocated with a visit to Havana by George Gershwin (1898-1937) in 1932. His *Cuban Overture* contains influences of the *son* and specifically includes a quote from Piñeiro’s popular composition *Échale salsita* and includes specific instructions in the score: “The Cuban instruments should be placed right

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⁹⁴ For more on these three *sones*, refer to Chapters 7 and 8.


⁹⁶ The first trips were in the 1930s but continued sporadically into the 1950s. The Trío Matamoros also visited Miami, Florida in April of both 1955 and 1956, and their last documented trip to New York was in August of 1960. Alberto Muguercia, “Matamoros: Un Firme Obstinado,” in *Nacido En Cuba: Música Cubana*, 137.
in front of the conductor’s stand.” 97 Distant ripples of the Cuba-New York exchange extend into what would later be known as Latin Jazz and would be a guiding influence for American musicians for generations.

Ignacio Piñeiro (1888-1969), a composer and pianist, was an instrumentalist of irrefutable importance in the advancement of the *son*. In 1927 he founded the Sexteto Nacional, which quickly expanded to the Septeto Nacional with the addition of a trumpet. This specific expansion was widely used throughout the genre, and the success of the Septeto Nacional extended well into the twentieth century.

The size of groups playing the *son* continued to grow, and by the 1940s *orquestas típicas* were common, as were *bandas gigantes* (big bands). No one performer had a larger orchestra, however, than the legendary *sonero* Benny Moré in the 1950s, who had accumulated thirteen players in his brass section alone. Accounts of his performances detail both the brilliance of his singing and the talent of his orchestra, and more specifically, the manner in which they all worked so well together. The band followed him with such miniscule gestures as the flick of his cane or the nod of his head. Moré (1919-1963) sang in Havana on CMQ radio and in bars and clubs where he could find work. In the early 1940s, he was asked to replace Miguel Matamoros (due to illness) in a performance with the Trío Matamoros. The temporary substitution was a great success and earned him a position with the Conjunto Matamoros on a tour to Mexico. Moré’s

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97 Premiering in August of 1932 as *Rumba*, it wasn’t until a concert at the Metropolitan Opera on November 1st that the work was renamed *Cuban Overture*. The percussion required includes the *bongo*, claves (referred to in his score as “Cuban Sticks”), *guiro* (referred to as “Gourd”), and maracas. The instructions for their placement are explained on the title page of the work, along with drawings (presumably by the composer) depicting each instrument. George Gershwin, *Cuban Overture*. Manuscript Full Score, Warner Bros. Publications Incorporated, 1987.
work with the *son* (as well as many other genres) permanently placed him into Cuban music history.

Considered to be one of the foundations of all Cuban music, the *son* is a genre of great popularity and influence. Its mixture of Spanish and African elements is a testament to the culture of the island, and its growth from a rural pastime to an urban fixture is a tribute to its musical importance in that culture. Crossing boundaries of color and class, the *son* is a universal symbol of the Cuban spirit, and one that requires both structure and freedom, uniting differences and eliminating prejudices.
CHAPTER 6
THE ARRANGER AND HIS CHOIR:
ELECTO SILVA AND THE ORFEÓN SANTIAGO

Electo Silva Gáinza is one of the fathers of Cuban choral music and a critical part of the success and prominence of choral music on the island. As a composer, arranger, and conductor, his influence and vision for choral music have set the standard for choral music in Cuba and in Latin America.

Born November 1, 1928\(^98\) in Santiago de Cuba, he and his family moved to Haiti in 1936, where he studied flute and violin. He returned to Oriente\(^99\) in 1947, where he studied theory and solfege at the Conservatorio Provincial de Oriente and was the first violinist for their Orquesta Sinfónica. In 1951 he joined the Coral Universitaria. In 1952 he was given a scholarship by the Alianza Francesa de La Habana to study in Paris, where he lived until 1954, studying psychology, pedagogy, and French. He continued his violin studies with the Orquesta de la Ciudad Universitaria, traveling with them to Germany.\(^100\)

Upon his return to Santiago de Cuba in 1958, he began to shift his focus from instrumental to choral music and founded the male choral ensemble Cantores Polifónicos and the Coro de la Universidad de Oriente, winning many awards and accolades in Santiago as well as in Havana. Silva was named Professor of Psychology at the

\(^98\) Several sources incorrectly cite Silva's birth year as 1930.

\(^99\) The eastern region of Cuba. For more on Oriente, refer to Chapter 3.

\(^100\) Giro, *Diccionario enciclopédico de la música en Cuba, Tomo 4*, 145.
Universidad de Oriente and in 1960 was the director of the Guidance Department and Dean of the Faculty of Education. In the same year, he founded the Conservatorio Esteban Salas in Santiago de Cuba and the mixed choral ensemble Orfeón Santiago. He worked also as the director of three children’s choirs and, in addition to being heavily involved in choral pedagogy, was often a guest conductor for the Orquesta Sinfónica de Oriente.\textsuperscript{101}

In addition to his work as a conductor, Silva was making his mark as a composer and arranger. Although he writes original compositions, he is most prolific with his arrangements of popular Cuban songs as well as those from other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. His arrangements and compositions are for choirs of all voicings, but the bulk of his work focuses on those for mixed choir, specifically for his Orfeón Santiago.

Silva has received numerous prestigious awards and accolades for his contributions to the arts, one of the most significant of which was in 2002 when he was given La Orden de las Artes y las Letras, en el grado de Caballero (The Order of Arts and Literature in the grade of Knight), which is awarded to people who have distinguished themselves by their work in the field of literature or the arts, or that have contributed to knowledge of French culture in the world.\textsuperscript{102}

After the Revolution in 1959, a wave of patriotism swept the island and many amateur choirs were formed to express their feelings of union and victory. Within the strength of this movement, on November 15, 1960, the Orfeón Santiago was born. They

\textsuperscript{101} Orfeón Santiago: Vigésimo aniversario del Orfeón Santiago, 1980.

\textsuperscript{102} Giro, Diccionario enciclopédico de la música en Cuba, Tomo 4, 146.
were the first group established in the province of Oriente subsidized by a grant from the state under the sponsorship of the Department of Culture and Education of the Provincial Government. Of the twenty-four charter members of the Orfeón, some had little or no choral experience. This initial fact did not deter their success, however, and just five months after their inauguration, they were awarded first prize in the Festival de Teatro Obrero y Campesino.

The premiere performance of the Orfeón Santiago was an event held just a month after their founding, on December 17, 1960, entitled “El avión de la poesía” (The Airplane of Poetry) in the Teatro Oriente, where Cuban authors and poets donated funds to purchase a fighter plane for the cause of the Revolution. This concert was significant because it was the first event in support of the Revolution “organized by our most outstanding intellectuals.” It was an extraordinarily successful evening, highlighting the work of Cuban composers and setting a precedent for the Orfeón. This precedent became a standard when in 1962 the newly created Consejo Nacional de Cultura (National Council of Culture) proposed that the choir become professional.

The fame and influence of the Orfeón Santiago spread, and in 1961 the choral movement, spearheaded by Electo Silva, began to host choral festivals in Santiago. With eighteen national and ten international festivals, there have been “a total of twenty-eight Editions of Choral Festivals of Santiago de Cuba, ratifying once again the strength and quality that this [choral] art has in the world and in particular, in our country, and this

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104 Ibid.
host city.”

Now held every two years, these International Festivals host a multitude of choirs, both foreign and domestic, for a series of concerts and presentations. During the 2009 Festival, nineteen Cuban choirs and five foreign choirs performed in venues around Santiago, and the event concluded, as is the custom, with a parade of choirs through the streets of the city.

The repertoire of the Orfeón Santiago is varied, spanning multiple centuries and nations. A main focus, however, is to highlight influential Cuban composers throughout history, and the choir’s commitment to promote Cuban national culture is very strong. Almost exclusively an a cappella choir, they do join together with other ensembles for larger choral-orchestral works for special events. Nevertheless, their signature is the music of Electo Silva and most specifically his arrangements of popular Cuban songs of the twentieth century.

As evidenced by the hundreds of choirs now in existence throughout the entire island, the Orfeón Santiago is one of the pillars of choral music in Cuba and has set the bar for other professional and amateur choirs. The country’s choral structure is vast and intricate, and the appreciation for the choral art runs deep within the Cuban people. The influence of Electo Silva and the Orfeón Santiago extends past the island’s borders, and has promoted the work of countless composers and allowed choirs to flourish in the twentieth century. After completing his famous choral composition Iré a Santiago (I will go to Santiago) for the Orfeón in 1970, Roberto Valera wrote:

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106 At the time of this publication, there were three professional choirs based in Santiago de Cuba: Música Aurea, Coro Madrigalista, and Orfeón Santiago.
For a composer that is always looking for a living instrument, one that is more involved in the creative process than simply being faithful by doing what is written, it is almost an obligation, if one considers oneself a musician and artist, to write for the Orfeón Santiago, since they possess the great secret of what we call “music.”

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107 Orfeón Santiago: Vigésimo aniversario del Orfeón Santiago, 1980. For the complete quote in its original Spanish, refer to Appendix B.
CHAPTER 7

THE MUSIC

There are several published octavos and a few collections of Electo Silva’s music, but 30 canciones populares cubanas is unique in that it only contains music from the very late nineteenth and first few decades of the twentieth centuries. This limited scope allows the anthology to highlight some of the most memorable and important compositions of that era, and to devote much-needed attention to the early contributions to traditional genres. Originally published in limited quantities in 1994 with a reprint in 1995, the volume focuses mainly on the son and the bolero and includes several important guajiras. Featuring nine genres in all, including hybrid genres, this collection of thirty Cuban songs contains many of the most influential compositions of a generation.\(^\text{108}\)

Adding to the impact of this volume is the thirty-four-page introduction written by Silva. Including a very brief history of choral music in Cuba and referring to many important composers and arrangers in the field, Silva begins with general information and moves to specific details. He addresses key, tessitura, form, melody, text, rhythm, texture, and performance and improvisation, and how his arrangements highlight those aspects. Serving as a resource for conductors and arrangers, this introduction is helpful in decoding this deceptively simple music and assisting its readers in their understanding of

\(^{108}\) Within the entire anthology, there are eight sones, eleven boleros, four guajiras, two criollas, one canción, and one punto. Therein also is one example of each of the following hybrid genres: guajira-son, canción-son, and bolero-son. For a complete list of titles and composers, refer to Appendix A.
how to take the music from the page. There are, however, two difficulties with this introduction and its ability to assist non-Cuban conductors in the performance of his music. The first and most obvious of the difficulties is language. The second issue is that it is not marketed for a broad international readership, but rather for Cuban conductors and arrangers. Referring quite often to “nuestra música” (our music), it only skims over musical concepts that would be familiar to natives, and does not go into the kind of detail a beginning student of traditional Cuban music would need. The information in this essay is intended to be a supplementary and fundamental resource for non-Cuban musicians.

The title of Electo Silva’s collection, 30 canciones populares cubanas, indicates that the contents of this book are thought of as Cuban popular songs rather than Cuban folk songs. The fine line between the two concepts lies in authorship—a folk song, by definition, has no specific composer, tends to have generational and regional differences, and usually comes from rural areas. The songs in Silva’s collection are based on folk influences, and many come from rural areas, but nearly all are credited to a specific composer; they are therefore classified as popular songs rather than folk songs. The details explored in each chapter of this essay focusing on genres (Chapters 3-5) will hopefully clarify any residual confusion of nomenclature regarding these two ideas.

This chapter discusses in detail six songs selected from Silva’s catalog of thirty, representing some of the most popular and best-known Cuban songs of the early

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110 The first song in the collection, De Cuba para La Habana (Punto), is listed as anonymous.
twentieth century. Each song will be approached from an historical and theoretical perspective, including elements of harmony, structure, and text. Compositional techniques in each arrangement will be addressed as well, continuing with a pedagogical discussion of each song in Chapter 8. The selections, in the order in which they will be discussed, are displayed in table 3. For a complete score of each arrangement, please refer to Appendix E, and to Appendix C for Spanish texts and English translations.

Table 3. Selected songs from 30 canciones populares cubanas arranged by Electo Silva

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Composer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variaciones sobre la Guantanamera</td>
<td>Guajira</td>
<td>Joseíto Fernández</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juramento</td>
<td>Bolero</td>
<td>Miguel Matamoros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro bembón</td>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Eliseo Grenet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son de la loma</td>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Miguel Matamoros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El que siembra su maíz</td>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Miguel Matamoros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lágrimas concertadas</td>
<td>Bolero-Son</td>
<td>Miguel Matamoros</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Variaciones sobre la Guantanamera**

Because of its influential position in the guajira genre, the inception and the history of Joseíto Fernández’ Guajira guantanamera are discussed at length in Chapter 3, as is the importance and the use of José Martí’s text, taken from his Versos Sencillos (Simple Verses). With Variaciones sobre la Guantanamera, Electo Silva took this beloved song and wrote a series of variations for soloists and choir (SATB div) that is both intricate and intriguing. The basic form of the arrangement is the well-known...
verse/refrain (or in this case, refrain/verse) that has become standard in much of today’s popular music. The number of verses (each different) and repeats of the refrain (each the same, sometimes with improvisation added) create a rondo-like structure (ABACADAEA). Each estribillo (refrain) is sung by the full choir, and each verso (verse) features a soloist with choral accompaniment. It is in these verses that the variations are explored, and also at the end, with a solo over a repeated choral estribillo in which Silva takes several liberties with convention. Because of these liberties, Silva refers to the final third of the piece (measures 57-116) as the montuno section:

In “Variaciones sobre la Guantanamera” the refrain is not varied...the arrangement of the verses varies depending on the different soloists. In the first three verses, the number of measures is the same, but in the fourth the soprano solo is presented like a free improvisation over a rhythmic and harmonic foundation, characteristic and calm. At this point the form expands naturally and we are faced with a resource unique to the montuno that can be exploited with ease. In reality, the Guantanamera assumes here, as it is indicated in the title, a form of variation.112

Although the basic structure of the piece is simple, each variation becomes more and more complicated as the piece continues, especially relating to key center, and when the montuno section arrives in measure 57, the true complexity of the piece is displayed. The structure of the song, along with key centers and Silva’s use of thematic material, is elaborated in table 4. The abbreviations “E” and “V” in the “Section” column refer to estribillo and verso; major key centers are represented by capital letters, and minor key centers are represented by lower-case letters. The roman numerals represent which quatrain of Martí’s Versos Sencillos Silva chose for the soloist in each corresponding verse.

112 Electo Silva, 30 canciones populares cubanas (Havana, Cuba: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1995), xvi. For more on the concept of montuno, refer to Chapter 5. For the complete quote in its original Spanish, refer to Appendix B.
Table 4. Structural Chart for *Variaciones sobre la Guantanamera*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Melodic Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>E1</td>
<td>EM</td>
<td>Choir theme A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-16</td>
<td>V1</td>
<td>EM</td>
<td>Baritone solo (Ia), Choir theme B (Var. 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-24</td>
<td>E2</td>
<td>EM</td>
<td>Choir theme A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-32</td>
<td>V2</td>
<td>EM*/GM, em^</td>
<td>Alto solo (XXVa), Choir theme C (Var. 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-40</td>
<td>E3</td>
<td>EM</td>
<td>Choir theme A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-48</td>
<td>V3</td>
<td>EM*/em^</td>
<td>Baritone solo (XXVb), Choir theme D (Var. 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49-56</td>
<td>E4</td>
<td>EM</td>
<td>Choir theme A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57-76</td>
<td>E5</td>
<td>EM</td>
<td>Soprano solo (XXIIIa), Choir theme E (Var. 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-84</td>
<td>E6</td>
<td>EM</td>
<td>Choir theme A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-108†</td>
<td>E7</td>
<td>EM (choir)</td>
<td>Choir theme E (Var. 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-98</td>
<td>CM (solo 1)</td>
<td>Alto solo (XXIIIb, 1st half)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99-108</td>
<td>EM (solo 2)</td>
<td>Soprano solo/duet with Alto (XXIIIb, 2nd half)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109-116</td>
<td>E8</td>
<td>EM</td>
<td>Choir theme A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Key center sung by the soloist and the bass section of the choir

^KKey center sung by the sopranos, altos, and tenors of the choir

†Measures/Sections in italics represent the variants from regular *estribillos*, the *montuno* section.

*Juramento*

Conforming to the traditional structure of the bolero, *Juramento* fits into a standard ABA form, with the A section in minor and the B section in the relative major. Although not indicated in the score, the first A section is repeated (as is often the case) before the B section begins. Each section contains five four-measure phrases, the first two in a contrasting period (antecedent, consequent), and the last three in a phrase group with the second and third phrases repeated. Based on the melodic material in these final three phrases, they could also be interpreted as an extended period, since the first and second phrases are contrasting, and the second and third phrases are nearly identical.

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113 Many other Cuban genres also adhere to this ABA form or a common variant, AB.
(antecedent, consequent, consequent). Every four-measure phrase in the song begins with an anacrusis in the melody (sung by the sopranos and altos) while the tenor and bass lines maintain a contrapuntal function throughout. The formal structure is described in further detail in table 5.

Table 5. Structural chart for *Juramento*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A (em)</th>
<th>B (GM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>b'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>13-16</td>
<td>25-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17-20</td>
<td>33-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37-40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Negro bembón*

The first of three *sones* discussed in this essay, *Negro bembón* is beloved not only for the familiar tune by Eliseo Grenet (1893-1950) but especially for the famous text by Cuba’s national poet, Nicolás Guillén (1902-1989). Published as the first poem in his 1930 collection *Motivos del Son*, *Negro bembón* sets the tone of the book. A defiant statement to the Cuban bourgeoisie, this poem uses archetypes from Guillén’s
neighborhood. At first read, the text could be considered offensive and racist, but at the time of its composition it carried with it a type of identity for the poor Cuban people, and they saw both humor and irony in its words. Defining himself and his fellow black Cubans, Guillén is making a statement to the more affluent, white society with Negro bembón—an important and telling declaration, capturing both image and dialect in what was at the time a literary triumph.

As explained in Chapter 5, the son conforms to the traditional Cuban AB form by way of an introduction (the song) and a montuno section (the call and response and/or improvisation). Each section of this overall form can have multiple parts, and neither has a prescribed length. Through the analysis of the three sones (Negro bembón, Son de la loma, and El que siembra su maíz, the last two of which are discussed below), these patterns and their possible variants become evident.

The introduction of Negro bembón is a straightforward parallel period made up of two contrasting periods, the details of which are outlined in table 6. The montuno section brings in the element of call-and-response, but instead of a soloist alternating with the chorus, the chorus iterates both the call and the response within its line, and the soloist adds an improvisation above it:

```
Te queja todavía
negro bembón
Sin pega y con harina
negro bembón
Majagua de dri blanco
negro bembón
Sapato de do tono
negro bembón
```


115 For the text and its translation, refer to Appendix C.
This format creates a larger call-and-response idea when the choral quatrain is used by itself, followed by the soloist with a choral accompaniment (containing the exact same notes, more simplified, but with a repeated text: “Negro bembón, ay negro bembón...”).

The melody is divided into two-measure phrases, corresponding to the poetic couplets and providing a structure over which the soloist can improvise. These details are outlined in table 7.

Table 6. Structural chart for the introduction of Negro bembón

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction (m1-16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a   b            a'  b'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4  5-8        9-12 13-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC  IAC       HC  PAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Structure for the montuno section of Negro bembón

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Phrase Grouping</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17-24</td>
<td>2+2+2+2</td>
<td>Choral Call and Response text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-42</td>
<td>4+7+7</td>
<td>Choral Accompaniment text beneath Solo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43-54</td>
<td>12+4</td>
<td>Combination CR (12) and Accomp. texts (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-54</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Optional repeat for Solo and Improvisation&lt;sup&gt;116&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-57</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Coda/2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; ending</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>116</sup> For more on this and other performance options, refer to Chapter 8.
The rhythmically active introduction of *Negro bembón* is supported by a rather repetitive bass line that defines the harmonic structure of the section. As Electo Silva points out in his introduction, this three-note bass pattern is the *tresillo* rhythm and contains the tonic in the first of those three notes and the dominant in the third note. In the second large section of the song, the *montuno*, the bass has a more active line but an equally traditional one. The rhythm of the *cinquillo* is represented in the bass line as well as in the melody (or a close variant thereof). The multiple rhythms presented by the choir in the *montuno* section provide an authentic foundation for the improvisation of the soloist that would traditionally be played by the supporting instruments in a *conjunto*.\(^{117}\)

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**Son de la loma**

Composed by Miguel Matamoros, *Son de la loma* was widely popular. In an interview conducted by his friend Alberto Muguercia, Matamoros explains how the song came about:

“*El Son de la loma*” is not called that, but “*Mamá, son de la loma*”. This number occurred to me in the year 1922; it was a night that I was giving a serenade in *Trocha y San Pedro*, in front of the sanitarium “*La Colonia Española,*”\(^{118}\) with me playing and singing was Alfonso del Río.\(^{119}\) Then from a house close by, a woman and her little daughter came out, and said: “Sir, sir, my daughter wants to know about the singers, wants to know where they are from.” Then at this point I was inspired by this question and that same night wrote the rest of the poem. No, no sir, people don’t know what it means: “*son de la loma*” it means, that they are from

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\(^{117}\) Silva, *30 canciones populares cubanas*, xxv. For more on the *tresillo* and the *cinquillo*, refer to Chapter 3.

\(^{118}\) *La Colonia Española* is in Matanzas, Cuba, east of Havana.

\(^{119}\) Alfonso del Río was a guitarist who sang with Miguel before the official Trío Matamoros was established in 1925. He was replaced by Rafael Cueto.
Perhaps the popularity to which Matamoros refers helped to change social conventions of the time. Matamoros goes on to note in the same interview that even though many of his songs were sung in Havana, including *Son de la loma*, other *sones* were not allowed to be performed. In the beginning of the 1920s there was still a racial stigma associated with the *son*—it was thought of as “*música de barracón*” (music from the huts) or “*cosa de negros*” (a thing of the blacks), and it was not played. This was the case even when Matamoros himself played in Havana for the first time in 1924. This convention was not changed until closer to the 1930s when the immense popularity of the Sexteto Habanero began to force an altered public opinion.\footnote{122}{The popularity of the *son* movement in the capital of Havana, and one if its main driving forces, the Sexteto Habanero, all of whom were black, forced people to begin to reconsider previously drawn class lines. For more on the *son*, refer to Chapter 5.}

*Son de la loma* differs in form from *Negro bembón* in its extended introduction section and abbreviated *montuno*. The form of the piece is a large AB, with each half containing its own AB sections. The initial half, the lengthy introduction, can be divided into two portions, and the second half, the *montuno*, can be divided into a *montuno* and a coda. The binary idea permeates throughout, as nearly all sections can be further divided into two parts. This concept is found consistently in each section except for the eight measures of *montuno*, different and improvisatory by definition, which is divided into five two-measure phrases. These details are shown in table 8.

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\footnote{120}{Literally translated, *son de la loma* means “they are from the hills”—Santiago de Cuba is known for its mountains. *Cantan en llano*, “they sing in the plains,” refers to Havana, a much flatter terrain.}

\footnote{121}{Alberto Muguercia, “Matamoros: Un firme obstinado” in *Nacido en Cuba: Música cubana* (Cuba, 1999), 113-114. For the complete quote in its original Spanish, refer to Appendix B.}
Table 8. Structural chart for *Son de la loma*, option 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (1-14/15) B (16-27)</td>
<td>Transition: 28-29 30-39 (2+2+2+3)</td>
<td>a 40-43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a 1-5, 6-9 a 16-23</td>
<td>b 10-14/15 b 24-27</td>
<td>b 44-48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A second option for overall form is to take what was previously considered the second half (or B section) of the introduction, and consider it part of the *montuno*. The supporting evidence for this theory is the irregular phrases in the B section of the introduction (measures 16-27, 8 + 4), the first eight measures of which cannot really be divided into two groups of four, but rather as four groups of two with an extension, which more closely conforms to the pattern in the following *montuno* section. These details are shown in table 9.

Table 9. Structural chart for *Son de la loma*, option 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction (1-14/15)</th>
<th>Montuno (16-39)</th>
<th>Coda (40-48)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (16-27) B (28-39)</td>
<td>Trans: 27-28 (2+2+2+2+4+2) (2+2+2+2+3)</td>
<td>a 40-43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a 1-5, 6-9</td>
<td>b 10-14/15</td>
<td>b 44-48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Determining exactly where the *montuno* section is to begin is important because it informs the performance in two ways. The most obvious to the listener would be regarding the *clave*, which, conforming to the characteristics of the *son*, should switch

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123 Measures one through fourteen repeat; measure fourteen is the final measure in the first ending, measure fifteen is the first measure in the second ending.
from 3-2 to 2-3 at the start of the montuno. 124 The second is less noticeable but not any less important, for the start of the montuno indicates the “improvisatory” portion of the song, and whether or not there is actually improvisation occurring, the spirit of the performer is conceptualized differently, for it is here that additional movement often becomes a part of the performance. Additional support for the argument that the montuno section should begin at measure 16 is the repeat written into the score of the first fourteen measures. Silva indicates the second ending to begin at measure 16 (with an anacrusis in measure 15), and the melodic material changes at this point, presenting a new idea.

El que siembra su maíz

The final son in this discussion, El que siembra su maíz, was recorded by the Trío Matamoros, and the recording first sold in Santiago de Cuba in 1928. It was produced as a single record with another of Matamoros’ compositions, Olvido, on one side and El que siembra su maíz on the other. For sale in La Dichosa on the corner of Enramadas and San Bartolomé, it sold out quickly. 125 Matamoros was often asked about the song and how he came up with the catchy refrain. Later in the aforementioned interview with Alberto Muguercia he explains:

124 Silva, 30 canciones populares cubanas, xxiv. Also factoring into the decision process is whether or not the clave should be in 3-2 or 2-3 at measure 16. There are other “misplaced clave” issues regarding this piece, specifically addressed by Silva in his introduction. He mentions that in measures 4 and 5 of his arrangement, he extended the end of the phrase by one measure, elongating a word, and causing a break in the clave pattern. He acknowledges this issue and states it as a conscious choice and change from the original Trío Matamoros version. He does not say, however, what the clave player should do here in light of this change. It is for this reason that the author decided in performance not to include the clave until measure 16. For more on this issue refer to Chapter 8.

125 Muguercia, Nacido en Cuba: Música cubana, 120. Enramadas and San Bartolomé are streets in downtown Santiago de Cuba.
This is how things are. “El que siembra su maíz” was a number of mine that reached major popularity and when I wrote and began to sing it, I didn’t like it. It is that way still and I don’t like it very much … I wrote it in 1928, in the same year that we recorded it for the first time. To write this number, I was inspired by a person who at that time was very popular in Santiago, I believe his last name was Casamayor, but everyone called him Mayor; the guy that I’m talking about sold pastries in the street and ironed shirts in his house... One day he wasn’t seen anymore, he disappeared and then, you know how people are, they began to say he was in jail, others began to say he was dead, some were convinced that he was hiding in Guantánamo because he had done something bad, a kidnapping, perhaps. In this son I invented the refrain “El que siembra su maíz, que se coma su pinol” this is to say that he who does, pays, that if a person does something wrong he should pay for it. Pinol is ground corn, toasted and sweetened, is very flavorful, but people in Havana don’t know what pinol is; in Mexico they don’t know either because there pinol is called something else, and always when I went there, the Mexicans would ask me what pinol is and I would explain it to them. All of my sones have a story, but with “El que siembra su maíz,” in addition to making history, I created culture.

With this window into the creation of the song, the fun-loving nature of its intention is revealed, and it becomes easier to understand that, like the refrain, the verses are also colloquialisms. Although knowing their meanings is important, the full intention is lost when each is translated literally. It is far more effective for understanding the overall message when the gist of each verse is considered instead of a word-for-word analysis. For the sake of comparison, however, in table 10 each verse is shown in its

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126 The implication here is that he was ironing as a service, to make extra money.

127 A city about two hours east of Santiago de Cuba.

128 Literally meaning “He who sows his corn, he eats his pinol.” In English, “You reap what you sow.” Refer back to the quote for an explanation of pinol.

129 The Trio Matamoros traveled frequently to Mexico, and occasionally for long periods of time, so it makes sense that he would refer to the way in which his music was received there.

130 Muguercia, Nacido en Cuba: Música cubana, 130-131. For the complete quote in its original Spanish, refer to Appendix B.
original Spanish, followed by a literal translation. Although some have comparable English equivalents, they would be approximate and be perhaps an over-simplification of the original idea.\textsuperscript{131}

Table 10. Translated verses of \textit{El que siembra su maíz}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>\textit{La mujer en el amor}</td>
<td>The woman in love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{Se parece a la gallina}</td>
<td>Is like the hen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{Que cuando se muere el gallo}</td>
<td>That when the rooster dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{A cualquier pollo se arrima}</td>
<td>Snuggles up to whatever chicken is close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{Las mujeres y los gatos}</td>
<td>Women and cats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{Son de la misma opinión}</td>
<td>Are of the same opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{No teniendo carne en casa}</td>
<td>Not having meat at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{Salir a cazar ratón} \textsuperscript{132}</td>
<td>They go out and hunt mice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{Muchacha dice tu abuela}</td>
<td>Girl, your grandmother says</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{No te meta en la cocina}</td>
<td>Stay out of the kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{Que el que tiene gasolina}</td>
<td>For whoever has gasoline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{No ha de jugar con candela}</td>
<td>Shouldn’t play with a candle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{El que siembra su maíz} is the opposite of \textit{Son de la loma} in that the “song” or introduction portion is short and the \textit{montuno} is expanded. The concept of call-and-response present in all \textit{sones} can be found in many different forms throughout this song, beginning with the introduction. The call-and-response section of a \textit{son} does not usually surface until the \textit{montuno}, but in this case the piece begins with a dialogue between two

\textsuperscript{131} For more on this text, refer to Chapter 8, where an attempt at an English colloquial equivalent is presented. For the complete text and translation of \textit{El que siembra su maíz} refer to Appendix C.

\textsuperscript{132} See Chapter 8 for more about this verse, not included in Silva’s printed arrangement.
groups—the sopranos, altos, and tenors, answered first by the basses, and then answered secondly by the basses, tenors, and altos together. The text lends itself to such a design:¹³³

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{¡Huye! (S, C, T)} \\
&\text{¿Dónde está Mayó? (B)} \\
&\text{¡Huye! (S, C, T)} \\
&\text{¿Dónde está Mayó? (B)} \\
&\text{¿Dónde está Mayó? (S, C, T)} \\
&\text{¿Dónde está? (C, T, B)}
\end{align*}
\]

Further examples of call-and-response occur in the estribillo: “El que siembra su maíz / que se coma su pinol / el que siembra su maíz / que se coma su pinol.” Although the entire choir sings both lines, the call-and-response concept still applies. The third example is a call-and-response between the soloist and the choir that occurs in each verse, as shown in figure 7.1. A fourth and final example of the call-and-response idea can be seen from a macro level, as the estribillo (choir) and verso (soloist and choir) are alternated. This concept along with the form of the entire son is displayed in table 11.

Table 11. Structural Chart for El que siembra su maíz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction (1-17)</th>
<th>Montuno (18-48)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-7 (2+2+3)</td>
<td>18-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-16 (3+3+3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17 (transition)</td>
<td>31-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44-48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹³³ Silva, 30 canciones populares cubanas, xxi. Adapted slightly from the original; “C” stands for contralto (alto).
Lágrimas concertadas

Lágrimas concertadas is Electo Silva’s arrangement of the influential bolero-son Lágrimas negras written by Miguel Matamoros. Again speaking to Muguercia, Matamoros equates its popularity to that of Son de la loma and reveals that he didn’t write it as a personal reference to his own relationship experience but because of something heard from a neighbor. He relayed that a woman would always return home lamenting about her husband, and how he, without explanation, had abandoned her. It
was because of this recurring incident that Matamoros was inspired to write the poem, inscribing lyrics that describe a deeply familiar and mournful experience.  

This hybrid genre combines the passionate lyrics and flowing melodic line of the bolero with the montuno section of the son, creating an overall AB structure. Silva calls it a concertada because he highlights a trio of soloists (soprano, alto, tenor) and uses them in contrast to the larger choir, creating a concerto grosso concept. In the bolero portion of the song, the soloists alternate with the choir on each verse (the trio sings one verse, followed by the choir repeating that same verse, creating a call-and-response). In the son portion, the choir continually repeats the estribillo, while on alternating repeats each soloist sings an “improvisation” above the choir. On the final repeat of the estribillo, all soloists join together to create a three-part descant over the choral part to end the piece. The complete form is charted in table 12.

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134 Muguercia, Nacido en Cuba: Música cubana, 114.

135 For more on the bolero-son and other hybrid genres, refer to Chapter 5.

136 Silva, Electo. 30 canciones populares cubanas, xvi.

137 This is considered by the author as a false improvisation because the exact pitches and rhythms are written out by Silva, and performed without alteration, but he refers to these obbligatos as improvisations.
Table 12. Structural chart for *Lágrimas concertadas*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Bolero</strong> (1-73)</th>
<th><strong>Son</strong> (74-105)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> (1-38)</td>
<td><strong>A</strong> (74-89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 1 (trio) 1-19 call</td>
<td>Estribillo (choir) 74-81 call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 1 (choir) 21-38 response</td>
<td>Estribillo (choir + solo) 82-89 response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong> (39-55)(^\text{138})</td>
<td><strong>B</strong> (90-105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 2 (trio) 39-55 call</td>
<td>Estribillo (choir) 90-97 call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 2 (choir) 56-73 response</td>
<td>Estribillo (choir + trio) 98-105 response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^\text{138}\) This section is referred to as B to show its binary nature but considering its melodic content, it is perhaps better referred to as A'.
CHAPTER 8
THE PEDAGOGY

The six songs selected from Silva’s 30 canciones populares cubanas discussed in this essay were chosen for their popularity, influence, and adherence to the representative characteristics in their respective genres. They were performed on October 10, 2009 with the Frost Chamber Singers, a 26-voiced mixed ensemble made up of graduate and undergraduate students. The concert was preceded by a six-week rehearsal period, during which the ensemble met three times a week for fifty minutes. The students were of above-average sight-reading skills, but only three were fluent Spanish speakers. The challenge was to teach these pieces to a choir unfamiliar with the rhythms, language, and style of Cuban music in the rehearsal time allotted, realistically expecting little outside individual work from the singers.

What follows is a detailing of what was learned from this experience, with in-depth explanations of the successes and challenges within each song. Additional suggestions are made about adding instrumentation and any other improvisatory elements to create a historically and culturally accurate performance, along with liberties and creative license that may be taken with the score. It is not the author’s intent to provide step-by-step lesson plans, nor is it to imply a definitive way of presenting this material.

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139 The selections in this chapter are not listed in recital program order, rather in an order that best facilitated a linear and progressive discussion. The program order for the October 10 concert was: Negro bembón, Son de la loma, Juramento, Variaciones sobre la Guantanamera, Lágrimas concertadas, and El que siembra su maíz.
Rather, suggestions are based on both successful and unsuccessful attempts made during this rehearsal process to convey this music to a collegiate ensemble and guide the singers toward a rewarding performance.

**Variaciones sobre la Guantanamera**

Silva’s arrangement of this extremely popular song has areas of both great simplicity and great difficulty. As was discussed in Chapter 7, the form is basically *estribillo* (refrain) and *verso* (verse), with each verse containing a variation. The *estribillo* is simple and repeats eight times (six times one way, and two times with a slight variation). This is beneficial because once the choir learns this refrain it has half of the piece learned. This repetition, however, can have a negative side, in the sense that it may become mundane and create difficulties holding the choir’s attention if over-rehearsed. The bass section is especially prone to this because of the nature of its part. The basses sing a two-measure loop, shown in figure 8.1, which is repeated 116 times. In fact, their part consists only of these two measures for the entire piece. The danger of this incessant repetition becomes tonal laziness and a tendency to lose the pitch, especially in the ascent from low “fa” up to “sol,” highlighted in figure 8.1.

![Figure 8.1. Bass line loop in Variaciones sobre la Guantanamera](image)
Contrasting with the sameness of the estribillo, each verso is varied, and contains different accompaniment parts for the choir. Each variation is not difficult to learn, but the three-part divisi of the women in Verso Three may require some extra rehearsal time. The text underlay in each verse goes by quickly so some time will need to be devoted to this aspect.

The most complicated feature of this arrangement is the solo lines. Handled individually without the choir, they are quite simple, but coordinating them with the choral accompaniment creates great difficulty, especially over Estribillo Seven (measures 85-108). Silva’s use of polytonality on this verse is interesting for the audience but requires great concentration from the choir and soloists. The choir need only continue on in the familiar key of E major, but the alto soloist must enter in C major, her starting pitch one whole step above the last tutti soprano note. The soloist continues for several measures on her own before the soprano soloist comes in to join her, in E major (while the alto maintains the key of C major). This has a wonderful effect, as the counterpoint of each line complements this duet beautifully, but if one or both soloists choose an incorrect key, the result is devastating. With no piano accompaniment to help, and the chance that after eleven pages of E major the choir might have gone flat, it is quite a harrowing task. When executed successfully, however, it is an amazing effect.

There are a few changes that could be made to this arrangement to avoid some potential problems, two of which are related to the solo lines. The key of the piece, as has been mentioned, is E major, but that is adjustable if necessary. The factors for this decision would be twofold: the capability of the bass section and the capability of the soprano soloist. As written, the lowest note of the bass part is A2 (an octave and a third
below middle C), which is not a reach for college basses but could be for some high school students. College basses have lower options within their range, which leads to the solution for the other difficulty with performing the arrangement in E major: the tessitura of the soprano solo above *Estrilillos* Five and Seven. As written, it ascends to B5, in some places sustained, which could be a deterrent for a soloist and severely narrow the pool of possibilities. Performing the piece in the key of E-flat major, making the highest note for the soprano soloist a B-flat (which in that register can make a significant difference), easily solves this problem. Because the range of the bass line was not difficult in the original key, lowering the key a half step does not present a problem for that section of the choir.

Another alteration that can be made to the score is to omit one (or more) of the verses. This could be planned from the beginning of the process, as the piece does become lengthy with all four verses and eight refrains; one could also make the decision later in the process if the soloist has difficulties. Tempo choice in this regard is important, taking into consideration style of the genre and speed of text in the verses for the choir. For this author’s recital, a tempo of quarter note = c. 55 proved successful.

The *clave* was not used in the performance of this piece, as this *guajira* was a more “popularized” or “modernized” version of the genre, taking it away from its rural

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140 In this document, all pitches will be referenced in accordance with the system that names middle C as C4.

141 Please refer to table 4 in Chapter 7.

142 Silva, *30 canciones populares cubanas*, xviii. Making the text clear is another difficulty here because of the range but the design of the soprano solo was to imitate the trumpets in *rumba* bands, so precise enunciation was not Silva’s initial goal.

143 There are other factors to consider when choosing an appropriate tempo such as the acoustics of the performing space and overall length of the piece.
roots. No other instruments are necessary for this arrangement, since the activity of the choir and especially the combination of the choir with the soloists create a very full sound that need not be supplemented. This is a general rule to keep in mind for the arrangements in this collection. Silva is adamant about the fact that no further instrumentation is necessary (save the clave), since the choral writing most often is designed to emulate the parts of the instruments.

Juramento

Often referred to as a hymn of Cuba, Juramento is dearly beloved and will be met with great appreciation by any Cubans in the audience. A challenge in performing such a popular piece (as is the case with all of these arrangements, but especially Variaciones sobre la Guantanamera and Juramento) is that anyone who grew up listening to and singing the song will have an idea of how it should go. The goal of a successful performance is to simulate this aural memory as accurately as possible.

Two ways that non-Cubans can fall short of this ideal are in tempo and musical phrasing. It is the author’s experience that Americans tend to perform Juramento too quickly, not relaxing into the sentiment of the piece. In Santiago de Cuba, home to Electo Silva and his Orfeón Santiago, their tempo for the A section is half note = c. 50-55. The B section is to be performed a little faster (c. 55-58), and with a more fervent intention than the A section. Silva explains this idea in the introduction to 30 canciones populares cubanas:

144 For more on the guajira refer to Chapter 3.
Neither can we forget something that has already been indicated about the form: in the second section of different types of Cuban songs, the tune is made a little livelier and the drive or accent of the dance is increased.\footnote{Silva, 30 canciones populares cubanas, xxiii. For the complete quote in its original Spanish, refer to Appendix B.}

The second inadvertent mistake that can take away from the authentic feel of this bolero is the concept of a forward-moving melodic line. In all music, of course, there must be a sense of motion, but in this case capitalizing on the anacrusis of each phrase (or anacrusis present in the smaller portions of each phrase) is central to conveying the inherent feel of the piece. Conducting in two, as is indicated in the score, will help this concept tremendously. However, although it is critical to perform this song in two, the contrapuntal lines of the choir and the resulting rhythmic polyphony can be very difficult to align when rehearsed this way. It might serve the choir to do a portion of the rehearsal (even just a few minutes) in four, but with a strong disclaimer from the conductor that the reason for this is purely diagnostic and should not interfere with the work being done to help the choir relax into the natural undulation of cut time.\footnote{In the preparation for recital, rhythmic precision was a difficulty. Rehearsing briefly in common time proved helpful, as well as remaining in cut time but singing everything on a staccato, neutral syllable. This process highlights any errors that may exist.}

As to intonation, it may take the choir a bit of time to adjust to the function of each voice part and adapt accordingly. The sopranos and altos are in thirds and sixths throughout and are exclusively singing the melody (or, more accurately, a duet with the melody). The bass part serves its usual function of outlining the harmonic progression, with the exception of measure 12 and the analogous place, measure 32, where it has a florid interjection. The tenor line is the point of interest in this piece, creating suspensions against each of the other choral parts and maintaining its own contrapuntal
identity throughout the piece. This line has a very high tessitura and can therefore become labored if the singers do not use a lighter mechanism. If this becomes a problem, this arrangement (like *Variaciones sobre la Guantanamera* and others), can be performed a semitone or even a whole step lower. Again, Electo Silva from his introduction:

> We believe also that, in performance, some of the arrangements of this edition can be transposed. For example, for greater comfort, or during rehearsals the following works can be lowered a whole step: *De Cuba para La Habana, Desolación, El que siembra su maíz, Juramento, Hasta siempre, Comandante, Alma de mi alma, Cuba, qué linda es Cuba, Variaciones sobre la Guantanamera*. To raise the work is something that becomes necessary in some cases, above all when [the pitch] tends to fall but since this depends on the possibilities of the choir, something we can’t be sure of, we leave this decision up to the directors.\(^\text{147}\)

Much of Cuba’s musical history is of an oral tradition, and as is true with any tune handed down from one generation to another or taken from one geographical region to another, slight differences are bound to present themselves. Also, as a piece is performed by one group for more than half a century, as is the case with *Juramento* and the Orfeón Santiago, slight changes are natural in its evolution. Many of these changes were observed in visits made by the author to rehearsals and performances of the Orfeón Santiago,\(^\text{148}\) and as a result, alterations were made to Silva’s printed arrangement for the author’s October 2009 performance. Two such rhythmic changes are outlined in figures 8.2-8.5. Although only shown here in the soprano line, each alteration was made in the three upper choral voices (the bass line was left untouched). In the case of figure 8.5, the same alteration was made to the pick-up to measure 38 (not shown).

\(^{147}\) Silva, Electo. *30 canciones populares cubanas*. p. xiii. For the complete quote in its original Spanish, refer to Appendix B.

\(^{148}\) Rehearsal visits took place June 10-19, 2009; performances were observed November 25-29, 2009.
There is debate as to whether the clave need actually be present in this arrangement or if it is meant only to be implied. The clave is indeed a significant part of the melody, as it is in any bolero, and although the song is quiet, the 3-2 clave can be played throughout. It is suggested, however, that the clave player be sensitive to the

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149 For more on the presence of clave and its rhythmic derivatives in the bolero, see Chapter 4.
dynamics of the score, and not overpower the choir, which can easily happen. Another option with the clave is to only implement it on the A sections and not the B section (which was done in the author’s recital). This further differentiates the sections from one another and works nicely in performance. This alteration is not necessary, however, and it is left to the conductor’s discretion to play the clave through the entire piece or to leave it out altogether.

*Negro bembón*

The form of this song works to the advantage of the choir in that there is not much material to learn. There is a sixteen-measure introduction, followed by an eight-measure repeated “call” in the montuno section. Once the choir is comfortable with those twenty-four measures, the entire piece is learned. The rhythms in the introduction might appear foreign, but they follow closely with the rhythm of the words. The same is true for the refrain of the montuno section, which almost completely coincides with the cinquillo rhythm, making it very simple. Because of the brisk tempo, the text goes by quickly, and some time will need to be spent ensuring its accuracy.

With regard to the text, special attention should be paid to the poetry and its translation in the rehearsal process. Quite often more emphasis is placed on making sure the choir knows the correct pitches and rhythms and less effort is spent on ensuring an understanding of the poem. The latter is very important for all of these arrangements and especially so for *Negro bembón* due to the nature of the text and the cultural misunderstanding that could arise from its misinterpretation. Although rehearsal time is precious, it is the author’s strong belief that a discussion of Nicolás Guillén’s words is

150 See tables 6 and 7 in Chapter 7.
vital to help the choir put them in context with the time period and the culture, and to better inform the choir’s performance. This opportunity carries with it a responsibility to guide students in a dialogue about race relations in Cuba, perhaps even tying in with those of the United States. The goal should be to draw on what students know from their own experience and to help members of the choir understand the intended humor, pride, and, to a small extent, subtle defiance in the words of the poetry. This teachable moment can allow a very profitable discussion about Cuban and, consequently, American culture. The greater understanding to be gained from this discussion is one of the many benefits of studying and performing this arrangement.

Aside from the spirited choral energy necessary to convey the fun of this piece, it is equally important to have a good soloist—one who is comfortable being uninhibited and emotive during a performance, and perhaps has some skills in improvisation as well. The solo that is written is not difficult, but what is not written in Silva’s score is a repeat of that solo, which, based on the Orfeón Santiago rendition, is entirely improvised. The success of the piece depends on the skills of the soloist to carry the piece to its vigorous finish. For this author’s recital, the soloist was coached to create a jazz-influenced improvisation based on a recording of the song from an Orfeón Santiago rehearsal and the soloist’s own jazz experience.151 After being given a few motivic ideas and using the harmonic framework in the score, she made the solo her own.

The goal in such improvisations is to use the score as a guide and to then take the initiative to adjust what is written within the stylistic parameters. The idea for the overall effect of the solo is to either completely change or enhance it during the repeat. Another

151 Orfeón Santiago rehearsals, led by Electo Silva, were observed by the author in June of 2009.
possibility is to treat it as a *da capo* and add simple ornaments to what is already written. A third option is to repeat the solo as it is printed, and a fourth is to perform the arrangement completely as written, with no repeat of the solo. If the decision to repeat the solo is made, when the choir reaches measure 54 it should go back to measure 29. The choir could sing the piece as written to the end or adjust the four-measure “vamp” as necessary to finish with the soloist. The soloist may end her improvisation on an F5 and thereby indicate to the conductor that she was finished. The choir can then repeat measures 53-56 with a *crescendo* before the final downbeat (measure 57) and sing a strongly punctuated “¡ja!”.

The overall idea of Silva’s arrangements is this: the pieces are acceptable as written, but performance can be enhanced (using the score as a guide and keeping within genre and stylistic guidelines) by adding material within the comfort level of each conductor, ensemble, and soloist. Therein lies part of the beauty and mystery of these pieces. They are living things that can be adjusted and adapted to fit the situation and the moment.

Some specific stylistic suggestions and subtle score alterations outlined below can help the conductor approach this material.¹⁵² In the introduction, the initial sixteenth-note pick-up may be changed to an eighth note, likewise in measures four and eight. A small ascending melodic scoop can be added just before the downbeat of measure 7, and the quarter note for the second syllable of “bembón” shortened. This shortening warrants a bit of explanation: holding the syllable for a full quarter note, as is indicated in the score, can sound too affected, as does shortening it to a strict eighth note. A compromise

¹⁵² These suggestions are based on performances and rehearsals observed by the author, and were implemented in the author’s October 2009 recital.
is to begin with an eighth note but to lengthen the note a bit by lingering on the final sound of the word. In the Cuban dialect, however, this final sound is not a pure [n] sound but more of an [ŋ] sound. The notation shown in figure 8.6 proved successful in conjunction with demonstration of the desired sound. This adds authentically to the text when this final sound is substituted for each iteration of the word.\footnote{153 For a complete IPA transcription and more about Cuban dialect, refer to Appendix D.}

Figure 8.6. Phonetic and Rhythmic Adjustment in \textit{Negro bembón}

Another dialectical alteration that was observed by the author during a visit to Santiago de Cuba was the omission of this final syllable of “\textit{Negro bembón}” altogether in the repeat of the \textit{montuno} section. With each recitation of the name, the choir simply sang “\textit{Negro bem}” and left out the downbeat in each measure, not finishing the word (see measures 25-32 of this arrangement in Appendix E). This practice emphasized the syncopation of the line (and the \textit{son} genre in general) and a natural rhythm created by the common absence of final syllables or sounds in Cuban Spanish.

The \textit{clave} in this arrangement begins a 2-3 pattern at the \textit{montuno}, measure 17, which is prepared by the choir with a short fermata on the last quarter note of measure 16 on “\textit{bem}” of \textit{bembón}. This pattern continues until the end of the piece. The claves are
silent in the introduction but can add slight ornamentation by playing the two middle eighth notes of measure 4 as shown in figure 8.7. The same could be done with measure 12 (not shown).

Figure 8.7. Clave ornamentation for the introduction of *Negro bembón*, measures 3-5

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*Son de la loma*

The structure of Silva’s arrangement of *Son de la loma* is similar to many of his arrangements in regard to texture. The soprano, alto, and tenor lines are homophonic, treated as if they were one voice, with a contrasting and contrapuntal bass line beneath them. This concept is considered to be an imitation of the original Trio Matamoros version, with a vocal trio singing the text and the guitar serving as a foundation. The function of the bass line in the choral arrangement is to outline the harmony in the *montuno* section but the bass line plays a more contrary and active role in the introduction (measures 1-15). This line is difficult both harmonically and textually and will need some extended rehearsal time. The increased level of difficulty for the bass section is a rare and welcome change to the typical monotony of Cuban bass lines.

Besides the concern for ensuring accuracy for the bass section during the beginning of *Son de la loma*, another issue is that, with so much of their writing ascending from low to
high, the top part of their range often becomes too heavy for the style (for example, measures 16-23). Care must be taken to avoid this, as well as an occasional approximation of pitch and weightiness that sometimes occurs during the opposite, high-to-low movement, as is written in the two-measure repeated figure in measures 30-39. Each of these situations is illustrated below in figures 8.8 and 8.9 respectively.

Figure 8.8. *Son de la loma* bass line measures 16-23  
![Figure 8.8](image)

Figure 8.9. *Son de la loma* bass line measures 30-33  
![Figure 8.9](image)

Similar to *Juramento*, the overall “dance” of the song is important to keep intact, which is helped by the 2/4 meter, and the line must continue to move forward. The choir can be helped by minimizing the downbeats and emphasizing the syncopated offbeats as the song moves forward. Thinking of “and two and” instead of “one, two” in each measure will give the choir a foundation for this, even if this rhythm is played or even

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154 Figure 8.8 is reprinted exactly as written in Silva’s *30 canciones populares cubanas*. As noted on the Errata sheet found at the end of Appendix E, the A2 pitches in measure 16 (the first measure of the printed example) should be B2.
spoken during rehearsal. The continued drive of the *clave* will also help keep the song lively, but the pattern should stop at the coda in measure 40.

*El que siembra su maíz*

This light-hearted and spirited song is a lot of fun to teach and is a delight for audiences. As mentioned in Chapter 7, the text requires explanation, since literal translations leave many questions unanswered. This is another discussion opportunity for students to learn about the culture of Cuba revealed in these colloquialisms and to share a few from their own heritage. As shown in table 10 from Chapter 7 (and also Appendix C), the literal translation of the verses of *El que siembra su maíz* is certainly clear in English, but an exact American colloquial equivalent is not always possible. Using this concept as a gateway to a discussion can be fruitful and beneficial to a choir, as a version of a well-known English saying is attempted to be superimposed upon the Spanish text. As is often the case, a saying that is popular in one culture often does not have an exact parallel in another, or even an approximate one, but at the very least the choir members will enrich their experience of the song with these types of discussions, and it will perhaps even help them memorize the text. At the risk of over-simplification, the colloquialisms in table 13 are offered as a loose parallel to the Spanish verses. At the time of performance, an explanation is also owed to the audience to ensure the full intent of the piece is conveyed correctly either by printed program notes or a recitation of the text and translation from the stage before the performance.
Like other arrangements discussed in this chapter, the repetition of the refrain leads to a faster grasp of the song’s structure; once learned, it can reduce rehearsal time. The refrain in *El que siembra su maíz* is very fast, and the text can be a tongue twister; the notes, although harmonically predictable, can be easily and unknowingly traded from one part to another since they all belong to the same chord and are similar in range. The conductor should be sure to correct these errors early in the rehearsal process so that they are not ingrained. The text and rhythm of the introduction can also be tricky and requires much repetition; consider rehearsing the soprano line down the octave in its early and most unfamiliar stages.

Essential to the success of this arrangement is a strong tenor soloist.156 The tessitura is high (C4-G4), emulating the range and the character of the celebrated Cuban

\[\text{Spanish Text} \quad \text{English Translation} \quad \text{Colloquial Equivalent}\
\begin{array}{lll}
\text{La mujer en el amor} & \text{The woman in love} & \text{If you can’t be with the one you love, love the one you’re with.} \\
\text{Se parece a la gallina} & \text{Is like the hen} & \\
\text{Que cuando se muere el gallo} & \text{That when the rooster dies} & \\
\text{A cualquier pollo se arrima} & \text{Snuggles up to whatever chicken is close} & \\
\hline
\text{Las mujeres y los gatos} & \text{Women and cats} & \text{Necessity is the mother of invention.} \\
\text{Son de la misma opinión} & \text{Are of the same opinion} & \\
\text{No teniendo carne en casa} & \text{Not having meat at home} & \\
\text{Salen a cazar ratón} & \text{They go out and hunt mice} & \\
\hline
\text{Muchacha dice tu abuela} & \text{Girl, your grandmother says} & \text{If you play with fire, you are going to get burned.} \\
\text{No te meta en la cocina} & \text{Stay out of the kitchen} & \\
\text{Que el que tiene gasolina} & \text{For whoever has gasoline} & \\
\text{No ha de jugar con candela} & \text{Shouldn’t play with a candle} & \\
\end{array}\

\[\text{155 See Chapter 8 for more about this verse, not included in Silva’s printed arrangement.}\
\[\text{156 Although the solo is sometimes written on the soprano line and there is nothing in the score to indicate otherwise, the tradition is that this soloist is a tenor.}\]
soneros\textsuperscript{157} from the 1930s and 40s. Silva grants the conductor permission to lower the key if necessary, but the ability of the soloist to improvise is also an important factor. No indication of this improvisation is in the score, but it should occur over a choral “vamp” after the final verse. The 2-3 clave should begin at measure eighteen and be played during the estribillo only and not during the verses.

A crucial element of structure was omitted from the printed version of Silva’s arrangement and should be added for performance. During each of the verses, the first two phrases should be repeated by the soloist before moving on to the second two phrases, as should the corresponding “answer” from the choir.\textsuperscript{158} Figures 8.10 and 8.11 indicate the original tenor line and its alteration, respectively.

Figure 8.10. Verse 1 of El que siembra su maíz as printed

\textsuperscript{157} Performers, specifically singers, of son.

\textsuperscript{158} Please refer to table 11 in Chapter 7 for exact measure numbers and repeat locations.
A smaller, less crucial alteration should be made to the melody line of the tenor solo as indicated in figure 8.13 (figure 8.12 shows the original verse). One pitch should be changed in the fourth measure of this solo verse (and at the analogous place in every subsequent verse) to reflect observations made by the author in rehearsals and performances in Santiago de Cuba. It is unknown if the original pitch written was a
reflection of earlier performances and gradually evolved into the current version or whether what was printed in the score was simply erroneous.

Figure 8.12. Tenor solo of Verse 1 of *El que siembra su maíz* as printed

![Tenor solo of Verse 1 of El que siembra su maíz](image1)

Figure 8.13. Tenor Solo of Verse 1 of *El que siembra su maíz* with pitch alteration

![Tenor Solo of Verse 1 of El que siembra su maíz](image2)

Another change made is the addition of a fourth verse, inserted between the second and third printed verses, as heard in rehearsals of the Orfeón Santiago.\(^{159}\)

Undoubtedly there are many other possible verses, especially considering the rural nature of this figurative text and that the improvisatory character of the song would allow for multiple additions. Because of this ad libitum concept, deciding on a strong ending for the piece could present a problem. Based on Silva’s rehearsals in Santiago, an extra *tutti*

\(^{159}\) Please refer to Appendix C for the added verse.
“¡cómo no!” can be added on a unison F (in the rhythm of its occurrence in each verse) after the improvisation by the soloist to end the song.

**Lágrimas concertadas**

This arrangement is a rendition of the emotional *bolero-son* Lágrimas negras by Miguel Matamoros. No section of the piece is overly difficult, but each creates an intense impact when put together. The choral parts of the bolero are of a moderate level of difficulty, perhaps slightly higher when factoring in the text. The choral part to the *son* is like the others discussed above—containing a few challenging elements but repeating the same eight measures six times, to complete the *son* section.

The true brilliance of the arrangement comes in the form of the *concertada*—the trio of soloists. Not only do they play an integral part in this work, but the success of the performance rests on their shoulders because of the call-and-response format and the prominence of the solo improvisations. The melody of the soprano is identical to the *tutti* soprano part and is not difficult to learn. The alto part has a few difficult melodic intervals and some interesting rhythmic passages. The tenor, whose line spans nearly two octaves (C4-A5: the tessitura lies in the upper fourth of that range), sings the most challenging portion of the entire piece. The tenor’s rhythmic activity and rapid text underlay, combined with moments of intense chromaticism, create a gorgeous counterpoint to the other two soloists but necessitate an experienced musician with a trained ear. Even though each solo line has individual importance, it is crucial to the sense of ensemble that the three voices blend well together.
The main difference between the Trio Matamoros recording and Silva’s arrangement is the transition between the bolero and the son. In the Matamoros version, the tempo remains the same from one section to the other. This means that the bolero tempo was not as slow as others in the genre because it is the same tempo as the son, which is traditionally performed faster than a bolero (especially at the montuno section). Silva makes an alteration from the Matamoros original by indicating andante at the beginning of the bolero and allegretto at the beginning of the son, which would make his bolero slower. The transitional measures from the bolero to the son (measures 69-74) contain no indication of acceleration, so it can be presumed that the allegretto marking in measure 74 is to be subito. Here is where theory diverges from practice, however, since in the rehearsals and performance of this piece, Silva conducts a slight accelerando beginning in measure 71. This smoothes the transition between the two sections and the piece continues at a slightly faster tempo, with no further adjustments until the very end. This montuno is driven by the choral estribillo, which in and of itself could have a variety of tempi. It cannot be too fast, however, because of the sixteenth notes in the solo obbligatos, which are syllabic and nearly impossible at too lively a speed. The very end is unusual because it just seems to stop, with no indication of a ritardando. Silva, nonetheless, slows slightly, but not until the last half of the penultimate measure. A ritardando may occur slightly sooner, beginning in the antepenultimate measure.

The clave for this arrangement, if aligning with convention, would be a 3-2 pattern for the bolero and a 2-3 pattern for the son (because this son begins in the montuno section, which is usually felt in a 2-3). In the Trio Matamoros recording160 this

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is the case, with the *montuno* delayed one measure in order for the correct cycle of the *clave* to be aligned with the beginning text: “*Tú me quieres dejar...*” (You want me to leave). It is fascinating to discover that the transition in Silva’s arrangement (measures 72-73) is one measure too long, causing what is called a “break” in the *clave*. In order for the *son montuno* to begin on the correct side of the *clave*, (in this case, the “two side”) that side would have to be played twice. This is customarily a strongly discouraged practice, and surely Electo Silva would not have done this intentionally in his arrangement.161

The reason for this is pure speculation but there are at least two theories. The first possibility for the error is that this is one of many instances of a miscommunication between an arranger and a publishing company, one that slipped past an editor. A second and perhaps more likely possibility is that it wasn’t a mistake at all, but an intentional lengthening of the line. Perhaps Silva intended the choir to finish one thought completely before moving into another. The final lyric in the bolero is “…*tiene lágrimas negras como mi vida*” (…has black tears, like my life). In the original Matamoros version, an extra measure of guitar *rasgueo* (strummed accompaniment) is added and then the *son* begins. In Silva’s arrangement, the melody is being sung by the sopranos, and they hold the final syllable of “*vida*” while the altos, tenors, and basses echo with “*negras como mi vida*” in the rhythm of the *cinquillo* (see figure 8.14 for this transition). This repeated textual extension creates the broken *clave*. In figure 8.14, the upper-most line demonstrates the *clave* rhythm to be played. Notice the broken *clave*, the repeat of the “two side” in the last two measures of the figure.

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161 For more on the concept of breaking *clave*, refer to Chapter 2.
The clave can be played in the bolero section beneath the choir (omitted for the trio so as not to sound obtrusive in an acoustically live performance space with only three singers), and then be faded out of the bolero during the accelerando into the son montuno (and therefore absent from this transitional material altogether). The clave can begin again (2-3) in measure 74.
A word of caution about the notation of the arrangement: Silva did not list the soloist lines in the conventional “high voice to low voice” hierarchy. The soprano is indeed written as the top line at the beginning, but directly beneath her is the tenor line, not the alto line. Conversely, in measure 82, the tenor solo line is listed first, beneath which is the alto, and finally, the soprano part. This was done to indicate the desired order of the solo lines, noticing that each soloist performs above the choir by him/herself, and not together as a group. The three soloists, however, do perform as a complete trio again over the final estribillo (measures 98-105), where the choral parts are conventionally notated, from low to high.

The score for this arrangement is a very accurate representation of what Silva intended, and aside from the above mentioned accelerando and ritardando, only one other alteration is suggested to the score. Again, based on the Trío Matamoros recording and the rehearsals of the Orfeón Santiago, one rhythmic pattern may be altered as it occurs throughout the piece (shown in both its original and adjusted states in figures 8.15 and 8.16, respectively), to create a more culturally accurate performance. The soprano line in measure 56 is shown, but this rhythmic change was applied to each voice part of the homophonic texture at every analogous place in the bolero, for both the choir and the soloist.162

Figure 8.15. Lágrimas concertadas, measures 56-59

[Music notation image]

162 Changes were made to the following measures: 39, 43, and 47 (solo); 56, 60, and 65 (choir).
Conclusion

Moving from the specific to the broad, several conclusions can be drawn based on the above analyses. At the risk of over-generalizing, the following observations can be made about the rehearsal and performance of Cuban choral music. These concepts, when applied to an already thorough rehearsal process, can create a performance that is both historically aware and culturally informed.

1. The texture of most Cuban music (and therefore many choral arrangements) is almost always three plus one—soprano, alto, and tenor homophonically together, and the bass line written in contrast, mainly outlining the existing harmony, and representing the “string bass” of a *conjunto*.

2. The score of an arrangement is merely a guide to its performance. Emerging from an oral tradition, what is on the paper is an approximation of what is possible. Verse additions (or deletions), key or rhythm adjustments (simplified especially since all of Silva’s and most arrangements of Cuban songs in general are *a cappella*), and improvisations are just a few of the available tools to make for a stylistic performance.
3. The clave is an essential part of Cuban music and is present in everything. A 3-2 pattern is played in the “song” portion, and a 2-3 pattern is played in the montuno section. The clave is implied in the rhythm of the melody, and it is felt, whether or not it is actually being played. For choirs just beginning to learn about Cuban music, it may be helpful to have the clave as an omnipresent force, but eventually the singers will hear it, or more accurately, feel it.

4. The desired tone color for this music is simple and, for the most part, should be with minimal vibrato. These songs are not performed with a complete absence of vibrato, but the simplicity of the music itself and the choral traditions of Cuba use a leaner sound almost exclusively.

5. Conveying spirit and energy in the performance of this music is essential. The Cuban people have a vitality and fervor to their daily life which is conveyed in the passion of their popular music. The strength and the importance of choral music on the island is made clear through its many arrangements. Keeping the feel of the dance (thinking most often in two instead of four) will help to achieve this fundamental aspect of performance.

6. There is no shortcut to musical excellence. Regardless of nation or culture, good choral music requires good musicianship, attention to detail, and good teaching skills. After watching hours of rehearsals from multiple conductors, the exact same processes were observed in Cuba that can be seen in the United States:
slowing the tempo and subdividing on rhythmically complicated passages, layering parts to help secure pitch accuracy, and isolating chords and harmonic passages to ensure good intonation. Using what is already known about creating high-quality performances holds just as true in Cuban music as it does with every other kind of choral music.
APPENDIX A

30 CANCIONES POPULARES CUBANAS

By Title

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song Title</th>
<th>Rhythm</th>
<th>Composer</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Son</td>
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<td>Gonzálo Roig</td>
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<td>Marín Varona</td>
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<td>Son</td>
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<td>Son</td>
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<td>Son</td>
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<td>Son</td>
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Roig, Gonzálo  
*Ojos brujos*

Saborit, Eduardo  
*Cuba, qué linda es Cuba*

Varona, Marín  
*Es el amor la mitad de la vida*
APPENDIX B

BLOCK QUOTES IN THE ORIGINAL SPANISH

CHAPTER 2: THE CLAVE

Page 10:
“De tal modo es manifiesta esta adaptación del concepto melódico al módulo rítmico, que el trueque de un compás en la percusión produce una discrepancia tan notoria entre la melodía y el ritmo, que se hace insoportable a los oídos que llegan a penetrar nuestra música.”

CHAPTER 3: THE GUAJIRA

Page 20:
“La Guajira guantanamera se formó mucho antes del “Suceso radial” con la Guantanamera, en la CMQ, y sin yo sospechar nunca que se haría mundialmente famosa. Yo trabajaba en una plantíca de radio, cantaba esa tonada con cualquier nombre: Guajira camagüeyana, Guajira vueltabajera. Había una guantanamera que estaba enamorada de mí, pero era muy celosa. Ella me traía flanes, cositas de comer, porque entonces pagaban centavos y, ¡pasábamos un hambre! Ese día me sorprendió hablando con otra y se fue indignada y, lo peor, se llevó el pan con bisté que me traía…Entonces yo agarré el micrófono y canté como nunca: “Guantanamera, guajira guantanamera/…guantanamera, guajira guantanamera/”. Ella volvió enseguida y el público comenzó a llamar y a escribir que así le gustaba. Y así se quedó.”

CHAPTER 4: THE BOLERO

Page 35:
“[El bolero] es el género de canción preferido por los orientales para las nocturnas serenatas, escuchándose sus apasionadas notas en medio del silencio de nuestras azules noches, bajo un cielo cuajado de estrellas, como la más tierna queja del alma romántica de Cuba.”
CHAPTER 5: THE SON

Page 44:
“Por simplicista, no podemos aceptar esta afirmación, pues, ¿cómo es posible que una institución armada, cuya función no era la música, pudiera lograr introducir el son en La Habana? No basta con afirmar que a este cuerpo armado estuvieran vinculados algunos músicos, muchos de ellos, soneros, que lo hacían más por lograr una cierta estabilidad económica que por el mismo hecho de hacer música. No puede negarse la contribución del Ejército Permanente en la expansión del son, pero esto no debe llevarnos a la afirmación de que lo trajo a La Habana. Más razonable es decir que el son llegó a la capital a través de los hombres que emigraban de su lugar de origen hacia otras regiones, incluyendo la capital.”

CHAPTER 6: THE ARRANGER AND HIS CHOIR

Page 52:
“Para un compositor que busca siempre un instrumento vivo, que más que fiel sea creador, es casi obligación, si se cree músico y artista, escribir para el Orfeón Santiago, que tiene el secreto de eso grande que es "La música".

CHAPTER 7: THE MUSIC

Page 56:
“En ‘Variaciones sobre la Guantanamera’ tampoco varía el estribillo mientras que las coplas a cargo de diferentes solistas son arregladas de diferentes maneras. En las tres primeras coplas la extensión en compases es la misma, pero en la cuarta el solo de soprano se presenta como una improvisación libre sobre un fondo rítmico-armónico, característico y tranquilo. En este punto la forma se expande con naturalidad y estamos frente a un recurso propio del montuno que puede ser explotado con facilidad. En realidad, la Guantanamera asume aquí, como se indica en el título, la forma de variación.”

Pages 61-62:
“‘El Son de la loma’ no se llama así, sino ‘Mamá, son de la loma.’ Ese número se me ocurrió en el año de 1922; fue una noche en que yo estaba dando una serenata en Trocha y San Pedro, frente al sanatorio ‘La Colonia Española,’ conmigo estaba tocando y cantando Alfonso del Río. Entonces de una casa cercana salió una señora con su hija, pequeñita ella, y me dice así: ‘Señor, señor, mi hija quiere conocer a los cantantes, quiere saber de dónde son.’ Entonces yo así me inspiré en esa pregunta y esa misma noche hice el resto de la poesía. No, no señor, la gente no sabe lo que dice: ‘son de la loma’ quiere decir, que son de Santiago; y ‘cantan en llano’ quiere decir que cantan en La Habana. Ese es el número mío que le ha durado más popularidad…”
Page 65:
“Mira tú lo que son las cosas. ‘El que siembra su maíz’ fue el número mío que alcanzó mayor popularidad y cuando yo lo hice y empecé a cantarlo no me gustaba. Todavía es y no me gusta mucho…Yo lo compuse en 1928, en el mismo año que grabamos por primera vez. Para hacer ese número me inspiré en un personaje que por esa época era muy popular en Santiago, él creo era de apellido Casamayor, pero todo el mundo le decía Mayor; el señor éste que te estoy cantando vendía pasteles por la calle y planchaba camisas en su casa…Un día no se le vio más, desapareció y entonces tú sabes como es la gente, unos empezaron a decir que estaba preso, otros que se había muerto; algunos afirmaban que estaba escondido en Guantánamo por algo malo que había hecho, un rapto, por eso. Yo en ese Son [sic] inventé el refrán ‘El que siembra su maíz, que se coma su pinol’ eso quiere decir que el que la hace, la paga, que si una persona hace algo malo debe pagararlo. Pinol es el maíz molido, tostado y azucarado, es muy sabroso, pero la gente en La Habana no saben [sic] lo que es pinol; en México tampoco lo sabían porque allí al pinol lo llaman de otra manea, a mí los mexicanos siempre que yo iba allá, me preguntaban qué cosa era el pinol y yo se los explicaban. Todos mis sones tienen su historia, pero con El que siembra su maíz, además de historia fue cultura lo que yo hice…”

CHAPTER 8: THE PEDAGOGY

Page 76:
“No olvidemos tampoco algo que ya hemos señalado al tratar de la forma: en la segunda sección de los diferentes tipos de canciones cubanas el aire se hace un poco más vivo y aumenta el impulso o acento de danza.”

Page 77:
“Creemos además que, en su interpretación, algunos de los arreglos de esta edición pueden ser cambiados de tono. Por ejemplo para una mayor comodidad, o durante las sesiones de estudio pueden bajarse hasta un tono las siguientes obras: De Cuba para La Habana, Desolación, El que siembra su maíz, Juramento, Hasta siempre, Comandante, Alma de mi alma, Cuba, qué linda es Cuba, Variaciones sobre la Guantanamera. Subir la obra es algo que se hace necesario en algunos casos, sobre todo cuando tiende a bajarse, pero como esto depende de las posibilidades del coro no hacemos sugerencia alguna y dejamos esta decisión a los directores.”
El arroyo que murmura

El arroyo que murmura
y que la luna retrata
cuando sus rayos de plata
atraviesan la espesura.
El sinsonte de voz pura
que alegra el monte y el llano,
la palma del verde guano
que al son del viento se mece,
y que murmurar parece:
es e s e p u n t o  c u b a n o .

Escarba la codorniz
al pie de los altos güines.
Y cantan los tomequines
en las gabias del maíz.
Se agazapa la perdiz
bajo el fondoso macio
el vigilante judío
por todo el potrero vuela,
y canta la gallinuela
en las márgenes del río.

Text: Gustavo Robreño
Translation: Beth Gibbs and Vicente Chavarría

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163 Literally, punto means “point” but here, the reference is to the musical genre, the punto cubano. The entire poem is making references to the punto cubano.

164 A tall, thin plant with lengthy stalks.
Y ¿tú qué has hecho?

*En el tronco de un árbol una niña*  
grabó su nombre henchida de placer.

*Y el árbol conmovido allá en su seno*  
a la niña una flor dejó caer.

*Yo soy el árbol conmovido y triste,*  
tú eres la niña que mi tronco hirió.

*Yo guardo siempre tu querido nombre,*  
¿Y tú, que has hecho de pobre flor?

---

Text: Eusebio Delfín  
Translation: Beth Gibbs and Vicente Chavarría
Yo soy un hombre sincero
De donde crece la palma,
Y antes de morirme quiero
Echar mis versos del alma.

Yo pienso cuando me alegro
Como un escolar sencillo
en el canario amarillo,
que tiene el ojo tan negro.

Yo quiero cuando me muera,
Sin patria, pero sin amo
Tener en mi tumba un ramo
de flores y una bandera.

Yo quiero salir del mundo
Por la puerta natural:
En un carro de hojas verdes
A morir me han de llevar.

No me pongan en lo oscuro
A morir como un traidor:
Yo soy bueno, y como bueno
Moriré de cara al sol.

Text: José Martí
Translation: Donald Walsh
Juramento

Si el amor hace sentir hondos dolores
y condena a vivir entre miserias,
yo te diera, mi bien, por tus amores
hasta la sangre que hierve en mis arterias.

Si es surtidor de místicos pesares,
y hace al hombre arrastrar largas cadenas,
yo te juro arrastrarlas por los mares
infinitos y negros de mis penas.

Text: Miguel Matamoros
Translation: Beth Gibbs and Vicente Chavarría

If love makes one feel deep pain
And condemns one to live in misery,
I would give you, my love, for your love
even the blood that boils in my arteries.

If [love] is the giver of mystical sorrows,
And makes man drag long chains,
I pledge to drag them through the
infinite and black seas of my toils.
¿Por qué te pone tan bravo,
cuando te disen negro bembón,
si tiene la boca santa,
egro bembón?

Bembón así como ere
tiene de to’;
Caridá te mantiene,
te lo dás to’.

Te queja todabía,
egro bembón;
sin pega y con harina,
egro bembón,
majagua de dri blanco,
egro bembón;
sapato de do tono,
egro bembón.

Bembón así como ere,
tiene de to’;
Caridá te mantiene,
te lo dás to’.

¿Por qué te pone tan bravo,
when they call you “Negro bembón,”
if you have a holy mouth,
Negro bembón?

Fat-lipped as you are,
You have everything;
Caridá sustains you,
She gives you everything.

Fat-lipped black man

Caridá, a woman’s name, or caridad, charity

Without a job, but eating well,
Negro bembón,
Majagua of white dri,
Negro bembón;
Two-color shoes,
Negro bembón.

Fat-lipped as you are,
You have everything;
Caridá sustains you,
She gives you everything.

Text: Nicolás Guillén
Translation: Beth Gibbs and Vicente Chavarría

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165 The original spelling has been preserved and not modified to modern Spanish spelling.

166 Fat-lipped black man

167 Caridá, a woman’s name, or caridad, charity

168 Con harina, literally “with [eating] flour” but in this case, harina refers to “something good to eat.” The implication is that although he is poor and unemployed, he is still eating well.

169 Majagua: a dark wood, a euphemism for a dark-skinned man. Dri: the African version of “dril,” a material made of raw cotton. The reference is that he was dressed in it; considered a luxury.
Son de la loma

Mamá yo quiero saber
de donde son los cantantes,
que los encuentro galantes
y los quiero conocer,
con sus trovas fascinantes
que me las quiero aprender.

¿De dónde serán?
¿Serán de La Habana?
¿Serán de Santiago,
tierra soberana?
Son de la loma
y cantan en llano.

¡Ya verá, lo verá!
Mamá, ellos son de la loma.
Oye, mamá, ellos cantan en llano.

¿De dónde serán, mamá?
Que me las quiero aprender.

Ellos son de la loma
y los quiero conocer.
(¡Vamos a ver, sí señor!)
El que siembra su maíz

Hey, where is Mayó?
He no longer sells on the streets,
he’s no longer on the corner,
he no longer wants to work.

What ails him?  I’ll find out!
You reap what you sow.170

The woman in love  
(Yes sir!)

is like the hen,  
(Oh yeah!)

that when the rooster dies  
(Yes sir!)

cuddles up to whatever chicken is close.  
(Oh yeah!)

Women and cats  
(Yes sir!)

are of the same opinion,  
(Oh yeah!)

not having meat at home  
(Yes sir!)

they go out and hunt mice.  
(Oh yeah!)

Girl, your grandmother says:  
(Yes sir!)

stay out of the kitchen,  
(Oh yeah!)

for whoever has gasoline  
(Yes sir!)

shouldn’t play with fire.  
(Oh yeah!)

Text: Miguel Matamoros
Translation: Beth Gibbs and Vicente Chavarría

170 Literally: “He who sows his corn eats his pinol.” See Chapter 7 for a discussion of this text.
Lágrimas concertadas

Aunque tú me has dejado en al abandono,
aunque ya han muerto todas mis ilusiones,
en vez de maldecirte con justo encono,
en mis sueños te colmo de bendiciones.

Even though you have left me in abandon,
even though all my dreams have died,
instead of cursing you with just resentment,
in my dreams I shower you with blessings.

Sufro la inmensa pena de tu extravío,
y siento el dolor profundo de tu partida,
y lloro sin que sepas que el llanto mío
tiene lágrimas negras como mi vida.

I suffer the immense shame of your loss,
and I feel the deep pain of your parting,
and I weep without you knowing that my
weeping has black tears, like my life.

Tu me quieres dejar,
yo no quiero sufrir:
contigo me voy, mi santa,
aunque me cueste morir.

You want to leave me,
I don’t want to suffer:
with you I go, my beloved,
even if it costs me my life.

Ah, confía en el amor;
contigo he de volver,
para ti será siempre mi flor.

Ah, trust in love;
with you I will return,
my flower shall always be for you.

Guardo el perfume de tu linda flor,
y sigo pensando en el amor:
por ti no sufre más, ¡no!

I guard the perfume of your beautiful flower
and I keep thinking of love:
for you I suffer no more, no!

Text: Miguel Matamoros
Translation: Beth Gibbs and Vicente Chavarría
APPENDIX D

IPA TRANSCRIPTIONS

Although the International Phonetic Alphabet is a helpful tool in deciphering pronunciations, it is not exact and the same symbol differs slightly from one language to another. For example, for all instances of [t] indicated below, the pronunciation should be with a softened “t,” more closely but not exactly resembling a “d” sound, as in the casual American pronunciation of the word “water.” No [t] in Spanish should be aspirated, as it would be in the first sound of the English word “task.” The transcriptions below indicate a change from the sound [d] to [ð], from [ɡ] to [ɣ], and from [v] to [β] in most cases, which, when combined with the abovementioned rule for [t], will ensure a native sound.

These transcriptions also reflect a Cuban dialect of Spanish, which most often changes the [n] sound to an [ŋ] sound. The other dialectical alteration is the silencing of many terminal [s] sounds, although those letters do remain in the below transcriptions. For example, the Spanish word maíz (corn), pronounced [maˈis], often becomes [maˈi] in rapid singing or conversation. It is up to the discretion of the director whether or not to pronounce these terminal [s] sounds in performance.
**Variaciones sobre la Guantanamera**

Yo soy un hombre sincero
[jo soi un 'ɔmbre siŋ'sero]

De donde crece la palma,
[de 'ðonde 'krese la 'palma]

Y antes de morirme quiero
[i 'antes ðe mo'rirm 'kjero]

Echar mis versos del alma.
[e'tʃar mis 'βersos ðel 'alma]

Yo pienso cuando me alegro
[jo 'pjens 'kwando me a'leyro]

Como un escolar sencillo
['komo un esk'o'lar seŋ'sijo]

en el canario amarillo,
[en el ka'narjo ama'rijo]

que tiene el ojo tan negro.
[ke 'tʃene el 'oho taŋ 'neyro]

Yo quiero cuando me muera,
[jo 'kjero 'kwando me 'mwerə]

Sin patria, pero sin amo
[siŋ 'patrja 'pero sin 'amo]

Tener en mi tumba un ramo
[te'nær en mi 'tumba un 'ramo]

de flores y una bandera.
[de 'flores i una βan'dera]
Yo quiero salir del mundo
[jo 'kjero sa'lir ðel 'mundo]

Por la puerta natural:
[por la 'pwerta natu'ral]

En un carro de hojas verdes
[en un 'kaɾ o ðe'ohas 'βerðes]

A morir me han de llevar.
[a mo'rir me an de je'bar]

No me pongan en lo oscuro
[no me 'pongan en lo'skuro]

A morir como un traidor:
[a mo'rir 'komo ðrai'dor]

Yo soy bueno, y como bueno
[jo soi 'βweno i 'komo 'βweno]

Moriré de cara al sol.
[mor'i're ðe 'kara al sol]
Juramento

Si el amor hace sentir hondos dolores
[sjɛl ɑ'mor 'ase sen'tir 'ondos ɗo'lores]

y condena a vivir entre miserias,
[i kon'dena βi'bir entre mi'serjas]

yo te diera, mi bien, por tus amores
[jo te 'ðjɛɾa mi bjɛn por tus ɗ'mores]

hasta la sangre que hiere en mis arterias.
[ˈasta la 'sɑŋɡɾe ke 'jerbɛn mis ɑr'terjas]

Si es surtidor de místicos pesares,
[sjes surti'dor ɗe 'mistikos pe'sares]

y hace al hombre arrastrar largas cadenas,
[i 'asjal 'ɔmbre ā'ra'strar 'larɣas ka'denəs]

yo te juro arrastrarlas por los mares
[jo te 'huro ā'ra'strarlas por los 'mares]

infinitos y negros de mis penas.
[inf'i'nitos i 'nɛɣros ɗe mis 'penas]
Negro bembón

¿Por qué te pone tan bravo,
[por ke te po'ne tan 'bravors]

cuando te dicen negro bembón,
[kwando te 'ðiisen 'neyro 'bem'boñ]

si tiene la boca santa,
[si 'tjene la 'boka 'santa]

negro bembón?
['neyro 'bem'boñ]

Bembón así como ere
[bem'boñ a'si 'komo 'ere]

tiene de to';
['tjene ðe to]

Caridá te mantiene,
[kari'da te man'tjene]

te lo dá to'.
[te lo ða to]

Te queja todavía,
[te 'kehə to'da'βia]

negro bembón;
[ʻneyro 'bem'boñ]

sin pega y con harina,
[sin 'peɡa i kon a'ɾina]

negro bembón,
[ʻneyro 'bem'boñ]
majagua de dri blanco,
[ma'haywa ðe ðri 'blaŋko]

negro bembón;
[ˈneŋɾo bɛmˈboŋ]

sapato de do tono,
[saˈpato ðe ðo 'tono]

negro bembón.
[ˈneŋɾo bɛmˈboŋ]

Bembón así como ere
[bɛmˈboŋ aˈsi ˈkoɾo ˈɛɾe]

tiene de to’;
['tjeɾe ðe ðo]

Caridá te mantiene,
[kariˈða te maŋ'tjeɾe]

te lo dá to’.
[te lo ða ðo]
Son de la loma

Mamá yo quiero saber
[ma'ma jo 'kjero sa'βer]

de donde son los cantantes,
[de 'ðonde soŋ los kan'tantes]

que los encuentro galantes
[ke los eŋ'kwentro ya'lantes]

y los quiero conocer,
[i los 'kjero kono'ser]

con sus trovas fascinantes
[koŋ sus 'trob̃as fasi'nantes]

que me las quiero aprender.
[ke me las 'kjero apren'der]

¿De donde serán?
[de 'ðonde se'ran]

¿Serán de La Habana?
[se'ran de la'βana]

¿Serán de Santiago,
[se'ran de san'tjaŋo]

tierra soberana,
['tjeʃa soβe'rana]

Son de la loma
[son de la 'loma]

y cantan en llano.
[i 'kantən en 'jano]
¡Ya verá, lo verá!
[ja βe'ra lo βe'ra]

Mamá, ellos son de la loma
[ma'mejo son de la 'loma]

Oye, mamá, ellos cantan en llano.
['oje ma'mejo 'kant'en 'jano]

¿De donde serán, mamá?
[de 'donde se'ran ma'ma]

que me las quiero aprender.
[ke me las 'kjero apren'der]

Ellos son de la loma
['ejo son de la 'loma]

y los quiero conocer.
[i los 'kjero kono'ser]

(Vamos a ver, si señor)
['bamos a ber si se'nor]
**El que siembra su maíz**

Huye, ¿Dónde está Mayó? 
['uje donde'sta ma'jo]

Ya no vende por las calles 
[ja no 'βende por las 'kajes]

ya no se para en la esquina, 
[ja no pd'reŋ la e'skina]

ya no quiere trabajar. 
[ja no 'kJere traβa'har]

¿Qué tendrá? ¡Ya veré! 
[ke ten'dra ja βe're]

El que siembra su maíz 
[el ke 'sjembra su ma'is]

que se coma su pinol! 
[ke se 'koma su pi'nol]

La mujer en el amor 
[la mu'her en el a'mor]

¡sí señor! 
[si se'ɲor]

se parece a la gallina, 
[se pa'rese a la ga'jina]

¡cómo no! 
['komo no]

que cuando se muere el gallo 
[ke 'kwando se 'mure el 'gajo]
¡sí señor!
[sí se'ɲor]
a cualquier pollo se arrima.
[a kwal'kjer 'pojo se a'ɾima]
¡cómo no!
['komo no]

Las mujeres y los gatos
[las mu'heɾes i los 'gatos]
¡sí señor!
[sí se'ɲor]
son de la misma opinión,
[son de la 'mizma opi'ɲon]
¡cómo no!
['komo no]
no teniendo carne en casa
[no ten'jendo 'karne en 'kasa]
¡sí señor!
[sí se'ɲor]

Salen a cazar ratón.
['salen a ka'ʃar ţa'ɾoŋ]
¡cómo no!
['komo no]

Muchacha, dice tu abuela:
[mu'ʈʃaŋa 'dise tu a'βwela]
¡sí señor!
[sí se'ɲor]
no te meta en la conina,
[no te 'meta eŋ la ko'sina]

¡cómo no!
['komo no]

que el que tiene gasolina,
[kel ke 'tjene γasol'iŋa]

¡sí señor!
[si se'ɲor]

no ha de jugar con candela.
[no ðe hu'yar kon kan'dela]

¡cómo no!
['komo no]
Lágrimas concertadas

Aunque tú me has dejado en el abandono,
[‘aun̪ke tu me əs ɗe’haɗo en el aʃɑn’dono]

aunque ya han muerto todas mis ilusiones,
[‘aun̪ke ja ɑn ’mwaɾto ’toɗas mis ilu’sjones]

en vez de maldecirte con justo encono,
[en bes ɗe malde’sirte koŋ ‘husto en’kono]

en mis sueños te colmo de bendiciones.
[en mis ‘swɛɲos te ’kolmo de βendi’sjones]

Sufro la inmensa pena de tu extravío,
[‘sufɾo la i’mensa ‘pena ɗe tu ekstra’vio]

y siento el dolor profundo de tu partida,
[i ‘sjɛnto ɓo’lɔr pro’fundo ɗe tu par’tiɔa]

y lloro sin que sepas que el llanto mío
[i ‘joro siŋ ke ’sepas ke l’janto ’mio]

tiene lágrimas negras como mi vida.
[‘tjene ’ləɣɾimas ’neɣɾas ’komo mi ’ɓiɗa]

Tu me quieres dejar,
[tu me ’kjeres de’har]

yo no quiero sufrir:
[jo no ’kjero su’frir]

contigo me voy, mi santa,
[kon’tiyo me βoi mi ’santa]

aunque me cueste morir.
[‘aun̪ke me ’kwɛste mo’ɾir]
Ah, confía en el amor;
[a kon'fia en el a'mor]

contigo he de volver
[kon'tiyo e ðe bol'ber]

para ti será siempre mi flor.
[para ti se'ra 'sjemple mi flor]

Guardo el perfume de tu linda flor,
[guar'do el perfume ðe tu 'linda flor]

y sigo pensando en el amor:
[i 'siyo pen'sando en el a'mor]

por ti no sufro más, ¡no!
[por ti no 'sufro mas no]
APPENDIX E
CHORAL ARRANGEMENTS BY ELECTO SILVA

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EL ARROYO QUE MURMURA
(Guajira)

Versión coral: ELECTO SILVA

JORGE ANCKERMANN

Allegretto

SOPRANO

1-El a-rro-yo que mur-mu-ra y que la luna re-
2-Es-car-ba la co-dor-niz — al pie de los altos

CONTRALTO

1-El a-rro-yo que mur-mu-ra y que la luna re-
2-Es-car-ba la co-dor-niz — al pie de los altos

TENOR

1-El a-rro-yo que mur-mu-ra y que la luna re-
2-La-car-ba la co-dor-niz — al pie de los altos

BAJO

He-l a-rro-yo que mur-mu-ra
2-Es-car-ba la co-dor-niz

1-trata, cuando sus ra-yos de pla-ta a-travie-san los pe-
güínes, y can-tan los to-me-güínes en las ga-ñas del ma-

2-trata, cuando sus ra-yos de pla-ta a-travie-san los pe-
güínes, y can-tan los to-me-güínes en las ga-ñas del ma-

3-trata, cuando sus ra-yos de pla-ta a-travie-san los pe-
güínes, y can-tan los to-me-güínes en las ga-ñas del ma-

4-trata, cuando sus ra-yos de pla-ta a-travie-san los pe-
güínes, y can-tan los to-me-güínes en las ga-ñas del ma-

y que la luna re-trata, cuando sus ra-yos de pla-
ta, al pie de los altos güínes, y can-tan los to-me-güínes.
El sinson-te
Seguza-pa

En las gábias del maíz
Seguza-pa

El sinson-te
Seguza-pa

De voz pue-ra que-le-grac mon-te y el llano, la palma de
la perdiz bajo el frondo se moci-o, el vigi-lan-

De voz pue-ra que-le-grac mon-te y el llano, la palma de
la perdiz bajo el frondo se moci-o, el vigi-lan-

De voz pue-ra que-le-grac mon-te y el llano, la palma de
la perdiz bajo el frondo se moci-o, el vigi-lan-
El arroyo que murmura
y que la luna retrata,
cuando sus rayos de plata
atraviesan la espesura.
El sinsonte de voz pura
que alegra el monte y el llano,
la palma del verde guano
que al son del viento se mece,
y que murmurar parece:
ese es el punto cubano.

Escarba la codorniz
al pie de los altos guineos,
y cantan los ternaguines
en las gubias del maíz.
Se agazapa la perdiz
bajo el fondo so macio
el vigilante judío
por todo el potrero vuelo,
y canta la gallinuela
en las margenes del río.
Y TU QUE HAS HECHO
(EN EL TRONCO DE UN ARBOL)
(Bolero)

Versión coral: ELECTO SILVA

EUSEBIO DELFIN

Tranquilo

SOPRANO

Contralto

Tenor

Bajo

En el tron-co de un ár-bo-lu-na ni-ña
En el tron-co de un ár-bo-lu-na
En el tron-co de un ár-bo-lu-na
En el tron-co de un ár-bo-lu-na

grabó su nombres-chida de pla-
grabó su nombres-chida de pla-
niña
niña

grabó su nombres-chida
grabó su nombres-chida

grabó su nombres-chida con pla-
árbol como vidado y triste
tú eres la niña que mi troncabo
Yo guardo tu nombre

Yo guardo siempre tu querido
Yo guardo siempre tu querido
En el tronco de un árbol una niña
grabó su nombre henchida de placer.

Y el árbol conmovido allá en su seno
a la niña una flor dejó caer.

Yo soy el árbol conmovido y triste,
tú eres la niña que mi tronco hirió.

Yo guardo siempre tu querido nombre,
¿Y tú, que has hecho de pobre flor?
VARIACIONES SOBRE LA GUAJIRA
GUANTANAMERA
(Guajira)

Versos: JOSE MARTI
Versión: ELECTO SILVA

JOSEITO FERNANDEZ

Allegretto

SOPRANO

CONTRALTO

TENOR

BAJO

Gua - ji - ra Guan - ta - na - me - ra,
Guajira Guan - ta - na - me - ra,
Gua - ji - ra Guan - ta - na - me - ra,
Gua - ji - ra Guan - ta - na - me - ra,
Gua - ji - ra Guan - ta - na - me - ra,
Gua - ji - ra Guan - ta - na - me - ra,
Gua - ji - ra Guan - ta - na - me - ra,
Gua - ji - ra Guan - ta - na - me - ra,

O - ye, o - ye, o - ye guajira,
O - ye, o - ye,

O - ye, guajira Guan - ta - na - me - ra,
O - ye, guajira Guan - ta - na - me - ra

Guan - ta - na - me - ra, (Idem)
Solo contralto

Yo pienso cuando melegro

—ye guaro yo pienso cuan do melegro

Guata namera (m)

—lor senciello

—lor senciello En el canario ma ri llo

Que tienes ojo tan negro

—ri llo Que tienes ojo tan negro
Guatamalera, guatamalera,
O ye, o ye, o ye, o ye.
O ye, guajira, guatamalera, o ye, guajira.

Guatamalera, guatamalera,
O ye, o ye, o ye, o ye.
O ye, guajira, guatamalera, o ye, guajira.

Guatamalera, guatamalera,
Yo quiero, cuando me muero.
O ye, o ye, o ye, guajira, yo quiero, guajira, guatamalera, guatamalera.
ca - rra de - ho - jas ver - des - a mo - rir mejan de lle - var.

O - ye, gua - ji - ra guan - ta - na - me - ra.

Sop. tutti

O - ye, gua - ji - ra guan - ta - na - me - ra.
Yo soy un hombre sincero
De donde crece la palma,
Y antes de morirme quiero
Echar mis versos del alma.
Yo pienso cuando me alegra
Como un escolar sencillo
En el canario amarillo,
que tiene el ojo tan negro.

Yo quiero cuando me muera,
Sin patria, pero sin amo,
Tener en mi tumba un ramo
de flores y una bandera.
Yo quiero salir del mundo
Por la puerta natural:
En un carro de hojas verdes
A morir me han de llevar.

No me pongan en lo oscuro
A morir como un traidor:
Yo soy bueno, y como bueno,
Moriré de cara al sol.
JURAMENTO
(Bolero)

Versión coral: ELECTO SILVA

Andantino

MIGUEL MATAMOROS

SOPRANO

CONTRALTO

TENOR

BAJO

si el amor hace sentir, honds do-

lo res y con de nago vi-

tr honds do lo res y con -

siel a - mor con -
vir entre misericordias, yo te

decir, mi bien, por tus amores

yo te diría, mi bien, por tus a-

hasta la sangre que hierve, mi ar-

mores, hasta la sangre que
-- terias, hasta la sangre que

hierven mis arterias, hasta la

18

Fin.

hierven mis arterias. Síes surtido

hierven mis arterias.

sangre, la sangre, mi bien.

21

dor de místicos pesares,

Síes surtido de místicos pesa-
y haces al hombre trazar largas cadenas, yo te juro traslas por los mares infinitos, ju...
Si el amor hace sentir hondos dolores
y condena a vivir entre miseries,
yo te diaria, mi bien, por tus amores
hasta la sangre que hierva en mis arterias.

Si es surtidor de místicas pesares,
y hace al hombre arrastrar largas cadenas,
yo te juro arrastrarías por los mares
infinitos y negros de mis penas.
NEGRO BEMBON
(Son)

Versión coral: ELECTO SILVA

ELISEO GRENET

Allegretto

¿Por qué te pone tan bravío cuando te dicen negro bemb-

Ne - gro - bem - bón, si tiene la boca san - ta, ne - gro - bemb-

bón, si tiene la boca san - ta, ne - gro - bemb-
¿Por qué te pone tan bravo,
cuando te dicen negro bembón,
si tiene la boca santa,
negro bembón?
Bembón así como eres
tiene de to:
Caridá te mantiene,
te lo de to.
Te queja todabía,
negro bembón:
sin pega y con harina,
negro bembón,
mandigua de di blanco,
negro bembón:
sapato de do tomo,
negro bembón.
Bembón así como eres,
tiene de to:
Caridá te mantiene,
te lo dif to.
SON DE LA LOMA
(Son)

Versión coral: ELECTO SILVA

MIGUEL MATAMOROS

Allegra moderato

SOPRANO

Ma-má yo quie-ro sa-ber de don-de son-los can-

CONTRALTO

Ma-má yo quie-ro sa-ber de don-de son-los can-

TENOR

Ah ma-má yo quie-ro-

BARITONO

B UNO

BAJO

dim.

4

Datos de don-de son tan bu-eños can-tán-tes que los en-cuen-tro yo muy ga-

8
los quiero conocer con sus travesías fascinantes que me...
—a— pococo

-ron de San-tia-go
tierra so-berana

de don de seran de don de seran

Son de la lo-ma y cantan en lla-no ya ve-

Son de la lo-ma y cantan en lla-no ya ve-

Son de la lo-ma y cantan en lla-no ya ve-

—ra, lo ve-rá ma-moé llo-so son de la lo-ma,

—ra, lo ve-rá ma-moé llo-so son de la lo-ma,

—ra, lo ve-rá. Ay ma-moé, ¿de don de se-
pero mamá, ¿de dónde se rán?
Ay mamá, ¿de dónde se rán?

—de la loma ay mamá, ¿de dónde se rán?
Ay mamá, ¿de dónde se rán?
Mamá, yo quiero saber
de donde son los cantantes,
que los encuentro galantes
y los quiero conocer,
con sus trovas fascinantes
que me las quiero aprender.

¿De donde serán?
¿Serán de la Habana?
¿Serán de Santiago,
tierra soberana,
Son de la loma
y cantan en llano.

¡Ya verá, lo verá!
Mamá, ellos son de la loma
Oye, mamá, ellos cantan en llano.

¿De donde serán, mamá?
que me las quiero aprender.

Ellos son de la loma
y los quiero conocer.
EL QUE SIEMBRA SU MAIZ
(Son)

Versión coral: ELECTO SILVA

Miguel Matamoros

Allegro moderato

SOPRANO

CONTRALTO

TENOR

BAJO

Don-de-es-ta Ma-yó

Don-de-s-

ta Ma-
yó

Ma-
yó

Don-de-

es-

31
¿Qué tendrá?
ya veré el que siembra su maíz
majó
¿Qué tendrá?
ya veré el que siembra su maíz

a tempo
¿qué se comía su piñol el que siembra su maíz que se comía su piñol
¿qué se comía su piñol el que siembra su maíz que se comía su piñol

—no, quien siembra su maíz
Si se —no, quien siembra su maíz, la mujer en el cama

(Bajo)
Se parece la gallina
que cuando se mueve
regi gaillo a qualquer pollo se arrima
si señor

O rit - - - - - a tempo
ne el que siembra tu maíz que se coma tu pollo el que siembra su maíz
el que siembra tu maíz que se coma su pollo el que siembra su maíz
siembra tu maíz como tu pollo siembra
(solo)

Líricas:

34

Mi casa es la que se come su piñol
Quién siembra su maíz
Muchacha dice

37

Tu maíz como tu piñol tu maíz

40

Que el que tiene garabato
No se va a jugar con

No fui

No fui

No fui
Huye, ¿dónde está Mayol?
Ya no vendo por las calles,
yo no se para en la esquina,
yo no quiero trabajar.

¿Qué tendrá? ¡Ya veré!
El que siembra su maíz
que se coma su pinol! (estribillo)

La mujer en el amor
¡si, señor!
se parece a la gallina,
¡cómo no!
que cuando se muere el gallo,
¡si, señor!
a cualquier pollo se arrima.
Muchacha, dice tu abuela:
¡si, señor!
no te metas en la cocina,
¡cómo no!
que el que tiene gasolina,
¡si, señor!
no ha de jugar con candela,
¡cómo no!
LAGRIMAS CONCERTADAS
(Sobre la canción "Lágrimas Negras")

Versión coral: ELECTO SILVA

Andante

Miguel Matamoros.
Aunque tú me dejaste, yo soy el abanico.

Aunque me dejas...

Aunque ya han muerto todas mis ilusiones en abandono, aunque han muerto tus ilusiones en vez de maldiciones no teman...
Aunque tú me has dejado en el abandono,
aunque ya han muerto todas mis ilusiones,
en vez de maldecirte con justo encono,
en mis sueños te colma de bendiciones.

Sufro la inmensa pena de tu extravío,
y siento el dolor profundo de tu partida,
y lloro sin que sepas que el llanto mío
tiene lágrimas negras como mi vida.

(Estribillo)
Tu me quieres dejar,
yo no quiero sufrir:
contigo me voy, mi santa,
aunque me cueste morir.

(Improvisaciones)
Ah, confía en el amor:
contigo he de volver,
para ti será siempre mi flor.

Guardo el perfume de tu linda flor,
y sigo pensando en el amor:
por ti no sufre más, ¡no!
## Errata

### Variaciones sobre La Guantanamera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Voice Part</th>
<th>Description of Error</th>
<th>Correction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Soprano Solo</td>
<td>Beat 2, last note of triplet, D sharp</td>
<td>D natural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Negro bembón

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Voice Part</th>
<th>Description of Error</th>
<th>Correction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Soprano Solo</td>
<td>Beat 2, G natural</td>
<td>G sharp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Soprano Solo</td>
<td>Beat 1, G natural</td>
<td>G sharp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Son de la loma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Voice Part</th>
<th>Description of Error</th>
<th>Correction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>End of Beat 2 and tie, A natural</td>
<td>B natural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### El que siembra su maíz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Voice Part</th>
<th>Description of Error</th>
<th>Correction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>Beat 1, G natural</td>
<td>F natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Alto</td>
<td>Beat 1, D natural</td>
<td>E natural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Lágrimas concertadas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Voice Part</th>
<th>Description of Error</th>
<th>Correction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Tutti implied</td>
<td>Solo lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>Beat 1, B flat</td>
<td>C natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>“con jus encono”</td>
<td>“con justo encono”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Tenor Solo</td>
<td>Beat 1, last 16th note, E flat</td>
<td>E natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-77</td>
<td>Alto and Tenor</td>
<td>Missing text</td>
<td>Same as m 84-85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Soprano Solo</td>
<td>Last 16th note unclear</td>
<td>16th note, C natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Soprano Solo</td>
<td>Last 2 16th notes, no text</td>
<td>“fro” of “sufro”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F

LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION

Ciudad de la Habana, 5 de octubre de 2009

A: Beth Gibbs

Estimada:

Atendiendo a su solicitud, le informo que la Editora Musical de Cuba no tiene objeción a que usted ejecute en la actividad de tesis de doctorado, con fines académicos, los arreglos corales del Maestro Electo Silva sobre las siguientes obras: “Negro Bembón”, “Son de la Loma”, “Juramento”, “Lágrimas negras”, “Variaciones sobre la Guantanamera”, “El que siembra su maíz”, “El arroyo que murmura” y “Y tú, qué has hecho?”.

Atentamente,

[Signature]

Ernesto Vila
Director
**GLOSSARY**

**Abakuá.** [əˈbɑːkuˈa] The secret society (whose members are also called Ñáñigo) originated in the Calabar region of Nigeria. This all-male group became prevalent in the strongly Afro-Cuban influenced port cities of Matanzas, Havana, and Cardenas, Cuba in the early nineteenth century.

**bandurria.** [ˈbaŋdʊrria] Similar to the laúd, with twelve strings tuned in pairs, and a pear-shaped body.

**bolero.** [bɔˈlero] A folk-based melodic song form that began and flourished in the Eastern regions of Cuba in the latter half of the nineteenth century and expanded into other areas of Latin America. Originally simplistic in its accompaniment, the genre expanded to encompass larger groups of instruments and gained remarkable popularity.

**bolero-son.** [bɔˈlero son] A hybrid genre blending the bolero and the son.

**bongo.** ['bɔŋgo] Small pair of drums with one pitched slightly higher than the other, attached at the center, used to fill out the higher registers.

**botijuela.** [ˈbotiˈhwelə] A large jar with a hole in it, played by blowing into the hole and modifying the pitch with one hand; the botijuela can substitute for the marímbula.

**bungas.** ['buŋyas] Groups of early performers of son, originating in Santiago de Cuba, consisting of only a guitar, a tres, and singers.

**canción.** [kənˈsjɔn] A simple, melody-based song form, similar to the trova and a precursor to the bolero.

**changüí.** [ˈtʃɑŋgwi] A more rural version (and predecessor of) the son, with a décima-based text and an instrumentation that includes a tres, marímbula or botijuela, bongo, and a guayo. It does not include a guitar or claves, as would be present in the son.

**cinquillo.** [ˈsinkɪjo] A five-note pattern that alternates eighth- and sixteenth-notes, containing within it the “three side” of the clave.

**clave.** ['klɑβɛ] A five-stroke binary pattern in either a 3-2 or 2-3 order. The driving force behind nearly all Cuban music. The Cuban clave has two forms: the son and the rumba clave.
**clavijas.** [kla'βihas] Dense wooden pegs used in seventeenth-century ship construction.

**colombia.** [ko'lobja] Form of rumba. A solo male dance designed to demonstrate strength and intelligence, is inspired by the Abakuá or Ñañigo secret society.

**copla.** ['kopla] A couplet (in poetic forms).

**con junto.** [koŋ'hunto] Developed in the early 1940s as an expansion of the septet, a group of instrumentalists that played mostly sones and consisted of piano, double bass, bongo, congas, tres guitar, four trumpets, and three singers who sometimes also played maracas and claves.

**contradanza.** [kontra'dansa] An early predecessor to the son, originally extracted from the “country dance” portion of the English dance suite, often containing influences from the habanera. Eventually evolving into the danza and the danzón.

**danzón.** [dan'son] Dance form in 2/4 containing a fast-slow-fast structure with an introduction followed by a slower second section, ending with a repeat of the introduction. This genre features brass instruments and the solo clarinet, flute, or violin.

**décima.** ['desima] A literary form with ten octosyllabic lines and a fixed rhyme scheme of abba ac cddc.

**estribillo.** [estriβijo] The refrain.

**guaguancó.** [gwaywano'ko] Form of rumba. A couple’s dance in which the dancers move in overtly sexual ways and depict a scene where the man is trying to capture the attention of a resistant woman.

**guayo.** ['gwajo] A metal cylinder with tiny protuberances, scratched in a rhythmic fashion with a rod or scraper, similar to the güiro.

**guajira.** [gwa'hira] A genre of Cuban music which, in its earliest form, contained a metric pattern of a measure of 6/8 followed by a measure of 3/4 and whose binary form contains a first section in a minor tonality and the second in a major tonality.

**güiro.** ['gwiro] Made from a hollowed-out gourd, the cylindrical body is held in one hand while played with the other. It is etched with equidistant grooves that when scratched with a rod or scraper, creates a raspy sound.
**habanera.** [aβaˈnera] A rhythm and song form used in eighteenth-century Cuba, deriving its name from the capital, *La Habana*. The *habanera* is an ancestor of the tango and the bolero.

**laúd.** [lɐ'ud] A small guitar with six pairs of strings instead of twelve separate ones, with more of a pear-shaped body instead of the hourglass shape of a guitar.

**machete.** [maˈtʃete] Knives used together to create a scraping sound in a rhythmic pattern. Used in rural genres, often replaced by a *guayo* or *guiro* in more urban settings.

**marimbula.** [maˈrimbulə] An instrument constructed with a hollowed-out box, over whose opening on one of its vertical faces protrudes several flat metal bars that are secured at one end. It is played by sitting atop the box and plucking or striking the bars by hand. Several notes are possible (depending on the number of bars) but the instrument is used in a bass function, therefore the dominant, subdominant, and tonic notes are most prominently played. It is said to have evolved from the African *sansa* or *mbira* (thumb piano).

**montuno.** [monˈtuno] An improvisation-based segment in the standard form of the *son* genre.

**música guajira.** [ˈmusika ɣwaˈhira] A term referring to the music from the rural areas of Cuba.

**Ñáñigo.** [ˈɲaɲiɣo] See Abakuá.

**orquesta.** [ɔrˈkɛsta] A predecessor of the *conjunto* and also referred to as a wind orchestra (or *orquesta típica*), it reached its highest level of popularity in the nineteenth century. This group contained a cornet, trombone á piston, ophicleide, two C-clarinets, two violins, a double bass, kettledrums (tympani), and *guiro*.

**punto.** [ˈpunto] A genre of *música guajira* sung by a soloist and using a *décima* as the basis for its lyrics. Also known as the *punto cubano* or the *punto guajiro*.

**punto fijo.** [ˈpunto ˈfiho] Form of *punto* in which the poet maintains a regular meter and tempo; a steady accompaniment pattern is used that continues during the vocal sections without stopping. Also referred to as the *punto en clave*.

**punto libre.** [ˈpunto ˈliβɾe] Form of *punto* that is less rigid in form than the *punto fijo*. Still based on the *décima* but the accompaniment does not play during the vocal portions.
**rumba.** ['rumba] Cuban dance genre with three types: colombia, yambú, guaguancó.

**seguidilla.** [səˈɣiːdiˈa] A Spanish folk dance and popular poetic form.

**sexteto.** [sɛks'teto] A standard grouping of instruments for playing traditional Cuban music: tres, guitar, marimba, bongo, claves, and maracas.

**son.** [son] A genre meant to be sung and danced, originating in the Eastern regions of Cuba and migrating to Havana. Popular initially as a street genre, it made its way to restaurants and dance halls, crossing boundaries of race and station. The form contains a “call and response” section (in one of many possible forms) and an improvisatory section called a montuno.

**sonero.** [so'nero] One who sings son.

**sucu-sucu.** ['suku 'suku] A dance and musical form that originated on the Isla de Pinos (Pine Island) that contains similarities to the son montuno, containing both a call and response section and an improvisatory section. Using a varied instrumentation, the most common is one that resembles the sexteto.

**tiple.** ['tiple] A small bandurria

**tres.** [tres] A small guitar with three pairs of strings instead of six separate ones. Used most often with the punto and the son.

**tresero.** [tre'sero] One who plays the tres.

**tresillo.** [tre'sijo] A three-note pattern that is identical to the “three side” of the clave.

**trova.** ['tɾoβa] A folk-style song form that was popular in the eastern regions of Cuba. A predecessor to the bolero.

**verso.** ['berso] Verse.

**yambú.** [jam'bu] Form of rumba. A dance for couples where the dancers imitate the elderly and pretend to have difficulty moving.
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