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A Jazz Performer’s Guide to Selected Genres of Venezuelan Folk Music

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A JAZZ PERFORMER’S GUIDE TO SELECTED GENRES OF VENEZUELAN FOLK MUSIC

By
Pablo Alberto Gil Rodulfo

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

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A JAZZ PERFORMER’S GUIDE TO SELECTED GENRES OF VENEZUELAN FOLK MUSIC

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A jazz performer’s guide to selected genres of Venezuelan folk music was edited, providing a repertoire as well as performance guidelines. Selection of genres and repertoire was guided by a combination of suggestions from an expert panel and a review of related literature. Featured genres were gaita, joropo and Venezuelan merengue. The information provided in lead sheets and performance guidelines was based primarily on the transcription and analysis of selected repertoire. To avoid using copyrighted material, contrafact melodies were composed on the harmonic sequences of selected compositions, based on stylistic elements observed in the transcription process. Performance guidelines were directed to piano, bass and drum instrumentalists, and they are intended for musicians who have a basic understanding of jazz harmony, but are not familiar with traditional Venezuelan genres. A bibliography with books, articles and recordings is provided. Appendices include the full transcriptions of musical examples as well as information on the work of the expert panel.
DEDICATION

This doctoral essay is dedicated to Amanda Gil, my daughter and dearest friend.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Gary Keller for his enlightening instruction, help and friendship; Dr. Edward Asmus for his hard work in securing my University Fellowship; Dr. Stephen Zdzinski and Jennifer Doyle for their feedback on my dissertation proposal. Thanks to Whit Sidener, Gary Lindsay, Reynaldo Sánchez and Martin Bejerano for agreeing to participate in my doctoral committee.

Deepest thanks to Eldrys Rodulfo and Francisco Gil for their unwavering support and affection.
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**Arpa Llanera.** This diatonic harp is one of the main instruments used to perform Venezuelan popular music. It is an essential element in *Joropo* ensembles. The *arpa llanera* is related to other diatonic harps introduced in Latin America through the Spanish conquest. It has nylon strings and is approximately five octaves in register.

**Bandola.** A family of string instruments used in the Venezuelan and Colombian plains. They are related to the lute. Their role is often melodic and they are usually played with picks.

**Bordoneo.** Refers to the use of the low strings of the harp in the accompaniment of the *joropo*.

**Charrasca.** Percussion instrument. Also called *carrasca*, *carraca*, *cacho rayao*, *güiro*, *güirio* or *guacharaca*, among other names. It can be made of different materials, such as wood and metal. Grooves are made in the material, which is then stroked with a stick. This instrument is used in Venezuela to accompany *merengues* and *gaitas*, amongst other genres.

**(The) Cuatro.** In Venezuela this term defines a Venezuelan folk music string instrument. It belongs to the family of the lute. Due to its popularity and widespread use in all of Venezuela’s territory it is considered the national instrument. It owes its name to the amount of strings it possesses (4). Its main function is as an accompaniment.

**Danza Zuliana.** A Venezuelan traditional musical genre in 6/8 meter. It comes from the state of Zulia, on the northwestern part of Venezuela. It shares some common musical characteristics with the *gaita*.

**Estribillo.** Chorus. When used within a *joropo* context, this term often refers to joropo forms in 6/8.

**Furro.** See furruco

**Furruco.** A friction drum used within *gaita* ensembles. It is similar to the Spanish *Zambomba*.

**Gaita.** Term used in Venezuela to group different musical forms that originated in the northwest of the country. The best-known variety of *gaita* is the one practiced in the northern part of Lake Maracaibo, commonly called *gaita Maracaibera*, *gaita Marabina*, or *gaita de furro*. The full traditional instrumentation for *gaita* ensembles is *cuatro*, *furruco*, *tambora* and *charrasca*, vocal soloist and choir. Contemporary *gaitas* have absorbed characteristics of other Caribbean cultures and they have become influenced by other genres, in particular by those grouped under the commonly used term *salsa*.
Gaitas are in 6/8 meter and they have no fixed harmonic subgenres. From the harmonic and melodic perspective, each gaita represents a separate composition. Their formal structure is often divided into a verse sung by a soloist and a chorus sung by a choir.

Golpe

In a joropo context, when the word golpe is used without any modifier, it refers to joropo forms in 3/4.

Golpe Corrión or Golpe Corrido. Same as golpe.

Golpe de Seis. Term that groups joropo forms in 6/8.

Joropo. Often considered the national dance of Venezuela, the joropo is a music and dance influenced by both Africa and Europe. There are many names for the musical forms that accompany joropo dances. All of these musical forms can be described as joropo. This genre is performed by different kinds of instrumental ensembles, but the plains harp ensemble is the most common. The standard instrumentation in this ensemble is a trio: arpa llanera, cuatro and maracas. A bandola, a more portable instrument, can be used as a substitute for the arpa llanera. Either the arpa llanera or the bandola can be the “major instrument” within these ensembles, providing at the same time melody, harmony and rhythm. The cuatro assumes a harmonic accompaniment role, and the maracas are purely percussive. Vocalists often sing the melodies. Joropos can be classified in two groups based on their rhythmic structure. The first group includes all forms in 3/4 meter. Joropos within this group are called golpe corrión or simply golpe, amongst many other labels. The second group consists of forms in 6/8 meter, and it is also defined by many names, one of which is golpe de seis. Joropos are commonly notated with a double time signature of 3/4 and 6/8, and they are performed in lively tempos.

Maracas. The maracas are a musical instrument in which sound is produced by indirect percussion. The word maraca has indigenous origin, probably form the Arawak or Caribe tribes. Maracas are present in most Venezuelan native populations, and they are used in many regions and musical genres in Venezuela. Often used in pairs.

Merengue. Merengue is a term used to define a Venezuelan musical genre, completely different to the homonymous genre from the Dominican Republic. Venezuelan merengue was originally used to accompany dances in urban settings, initially associated mostly with bars and brothels. It later gained mainstream acceptance, and it is now one of the most important local genres. There are many possible explanations advanced to explain the origin of the name merengue, but none has generated consensus between scholars. The instrumentation used in merengue ensembles varies. In most of them, the cuatro is present to provide harmonic and rhythmic support. Different kinds of percussion instruments are used to accompany merengues, such as the charanga, the snare drum, and the contemporary drum set. Melodies are either sung by vocalists or performed by brass or woodwind instrumentalists. The correct notation of the Venezuelan merengue is a controversial issue, and it has generated many studies and debates. However, all
notation systems devised by musicians and scholars to describe the rhythmic nature of the merengue have in common a five-note pattern. Most contemporary Venezuelan musicians choose a notation in 5/8 to describe the merengue feel.

**Montuno.** Term associated with afro-Cuban jazz and salsa. It refers to a repeated two- or four-bar phrase, played by the piano as an accompaniment figure. It is also known as guajeo or tumbao.

**Repique.** Synonymous with fill, played in percussion instruments or in the cuatro.

**Tambora.** In gaita ensembles, tamboras are the main drums used for rhythmic accompaniment. They are performed with short, thick sticks hitting alternatively on the skin and on the wood of the drum.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Jazz has had a mutually enriching relationship with genres and repertoire from different cultures during its history, beginning with its African roots and European-American heritage. Landmark compositions and recordings such as Dizzy Gillespie’s and Chano Pozo’s “Manteca,” Dave Brubeck’s “Blue Rondo a la Turk,” and Miles Davis’ album *Sketches of Spain* show how the influence of music from many areas of the world has enlarged the repertoire, forms, melodic content, harmonic language and rhythmic structure of jazz. This mutual influence continues in the varied forms of hybrid jazz practiced by contemporary musicians around the globe.

Some of the larger foreign contributions to jazz have been made by countries from Latin America. This process has been thoroughly documented from the earliest stages of jazz: “Latin ostinatos were part of Jelly Roll Morton’s style…Morton referred to this rhythmic element as the ‘Spanish Tinge’ and claimed it was essential to jazz.”

Music and musicians from countries such as Brazil, Cuba and Argentina have played an important role in jazz since the ‘40s.

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The recognition obtained in jazz circles by music from other Latin-American nations has eluded Venezuelan music. However, international interest in traditional Venezuelan music has been growing steadily since the ‘80s, and international musicians as diverse as John Williams, Joe Zawinul and Paquito D’Rivera have used traditional Venezuelan music elements in their compositions and recordings. Important contemporary Venezuelan-born American jazz pianists, such as Edward Simon and Luís Perdomo, have also included Venezuelan genres and repertoire in their works. On the other hand, Venezuelan groups from the ‘70s and ‘80s, such as El Cuarteto and Gurrufio, have cultivated the local traditional repertoire and inspired generations of young Venezuelan musicians to follow their steps.

According to Chilean musicologist Christian Espinosa, “Venezuelan folk music is recognized today as one of the most important seedbeds of talent in the western Hispanic world.” Mr. Espinosa goes on to mention world-famous groups such as Serenata Guayanesa, as well as the previously discussed Gurrufio and El Cuarteto, as examples of important traditional Venezuelan music ensembles. The current generation of local musicians has blended local and international genres, instruments and styles in an eclectic musical continuum. In the same article, Mr. Espinosa describes the local music scene, in which “the terms ‘popular’ and ‘folk’ and ‘traditional’ and ‘jazz’ become redundant in

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this context, better described as new, cutting-edge ‘Venezuelan music’.”6 The vibrant musical scene described by Mr. Espinosa shows the importance of creating instructional material that helps its local and international development.

**Need for the Study**

Venezuela’s aural traditions are increasingly becoming an important source of a jazz sub-genre. In order to continue its growth and fully develop its potential, this sub-genre needs an adequate source of repertoire, and guidelines to help performers from different cultures approach its genres and stylistic elements. Currently no viable alternatives exist for either. The main purpose of this essay is to offer instructional material that fulfills both needs. Most performers have had to transcribe recordings in order to learn the repertoire. Young students whose training is still incomplete have great difficulties in finding suitable educational material, and in my experience as a performer I have observed that even professional musicians often do not agree on the harmonic and melodic content of the compositions.

Most non-classical musicians (with the probable exception of those that cultivate very traditional forms of folklore) share a basic knowledge of the chord symbols used in jazz and “popular” music, and jazz rhythm section instruments have been adopted by almost all cultures and used to perform music in different genres. This shared knowledge had led me to develop this guide within a jazz context, using chord symbols and structural, harmonic, melodic and rhythmic analysis tools relevant to jazz.

None of the publications reviewed in the related literature review chapter of this essay fulfills the need for instructional material as stated in this section. This affirmation

can be verified by studying the detailed listing of different publications of Venezuelan music provided in the same chapter, where each entry is described in depth. Repertoire selection in most publications is often arbitrary or limited to specific composers or genres. Another common limitation of published Venezuelan music is its narrow scope. Some of the publications reviewed cater to Venezuelan *cuatro* or guitar instrumentalists, and they use instrument-specific tablature. Others do not provide sheet music, and associate chord changes with the lyrics, making the harmonic rhythm unclear. Another publication reviewed uses piano arrangements featuring specific keyboard textures that do not apply well to other instruments.

These characteristics observed in Venezuelan anthologies and instructional materials confirm the need for a performer’s guide that provides adequately edited sheet music of Venezuelan repertoire.

I initially planned to use the best-known Venezuelan compositions as the basis for the repertoire of this guide. This would have satisfied the need for the study as previously stated. Even though this need was not fulfilled by the final version of this essay due to copyright licensing issues encountered after research was under way, it was a driving force behind the research project, and I put good amount of effort and time into transcribing and analyzing selected Venezuelan repertoire. Some transcriptions of selected repertoire are featured in Appendix A, modified to avoid copyright infringement. The information gathered through these transcriptions was used as the basis for creating

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7. “The *Cuatro* is a Venezuelan folk music plucked-strings instrument. It belongs to the family of the lute. Due to its popularity and widespread use in all of Venezuela’s territory it is considered the national instrument. It owes its name to the amount of strings it possesses. Its main function is as an accompaniment.” Jose Peñín and Walter Guido, eds., *Enciclopedia de la Música en Venezuela, Vol.1* (Caracas: Fundación Bigott, 1998), 1:457-463.
the “contrafact” melodies offered in this guide. This procedure was followed in the context of jazz tradition: in an article about jazz composition, Richard Helzer defines the practice of writing contrafact melodies in jazz: “writing an original melody over the chord changes of a standard tune.”8 In this manner, the need for a repertoire to be used in an instructional setting was fulfilled, although in a different way than initially foreseen at the start of this research.

The related literature review in this essay shows that the stylistic elements relevant to performing selected Venezuelan genres on rhythm section instruments and melodic instruments have not been previously studied and compiled for pedagogical use. This performer’s guide includes melodic material and information on performance practice in these genres for piano, bass and drums. Most of this information comes from the transcription of selected Venezuelan compositions that could not be used as the repertoire in this essay.

**Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this essay is to create a jazz performer’s guide to Venezuelan music. It offers both a repertoire to be performed and guidelines on the stylistically adequate performance of selected Venezuelan genres.

**Questions to Be Answered**

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. Which compositions and genres should be included in a performer’s guide to Venezuelan music?

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2. Which is the best way to present selected compositions in terms of harmony, melody and other musical elements?

3. Which traditional subgenres are to be represented?

4. What information should be included on how to perform the different genres?

**Scope of the Study**

According to *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, a standard is “a composition, usually a popular song, that becomes an established item in the repertory; by extension, therefore, a song that a professional musician may be expected to know.” For the purpose of this study, a composition selected by at least three members of an expert panel was considered to have become “an established item in the repertory” and therefore achieved standard status. More information on the expert panel is available in the method chapter and in Appendices B and C.

This study is limited to music created within certain genres of traditional Venezuelan music. The genres selected are Venezuelan *merengue*, *gaita* and *joropo* (see Chapter Four for information on each genre). The method chapter of this essay offers explanations on why these limitations were applied to the repertoire and why these genres were chosen.

Repertoire recorded in all documented periods was reviewed for selection. The sources from which the compositions were gathered were primarily the first authorized recordings, or recordings by their authors. In cases where subsequent recorded versions

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have become strongly associated with specific compositions, their contributions were considered and added to the guide.

The presentation of each individual composition was inspired by anthologies such as *The New Real Book* and the Brazilian songbooks by Almir Chediak. Lead sheet versions were provided with unadorned melody and basic chords. When it seemed essential, information on other important musical elements such as introductions, bass lines, countermelodies or specific accompaniments was provided. This information was included on the lead sheets when possible, or provided in adjacent pages. Chord progressions were transcribed based on the original recorded versions. When standard contemporary performance practice included the use of different chord progressions, these were added above the basic chords as alternate harmonizations. Chord progressions of important subgenres within chosen genres were also included. A bibliography including the recordings used as sources of selected compositions and traditional subgenres was provided.

The guidelines offered in this essay on how to perform Venezuelan music are also limited within the choice of genres already mentioned: *gaita*, *joropo* and *merengue*. They are intended for performers who are not familiar with traditional Venezuelan genres and who share a basic understanding of jazz harmony. These guidelines contain basic information for rhythm section instruments on how to accompany some of the most important styles.

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CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews publications on several subjects related to this essay, and it is divided into three sections based on the kind of material studied. The first section discusses jazz real books, fake books and instructional publications; it also includes overviews of anthologies of different types of world music. All the types of publications included in this first section share a common characteristic: they include sheet music that uses copyrighted material in different ways. They do so with legal authorization, without it, or by omitting the melodies to avoid copyright issues altogether. I have placed a special emphasis on anthologies of Brazilian music, since it has had a powerful influence in neighboring Venezuela from the late ‘50s onwards.

The second section of this chapter looks into reference books and articles on jazz, Latin jazz, Latin American music and world music. It seeks to establish a theoretical framework for the relationship between jazz and music from other cultures. The third is specific to the country whose music has inspired this essay, and it is dedicated to books and articles on Venezuelan music and anthologies of Venezuelan repertoire. Some of the material reviewed has not been officially published, but it circulates widely amongst musicians. Catalogs of recordings by Venezuelan performers are also included, since they provide information on sources of Venezuelan standards.

Fake Books, Anthologies and Jazz Instructional Publications

Many standard anthologies of standards and jazz repertoire have been published in the United States. They have commonly been referred to as “fake books” or “real
books.” Generations of musicians have used them as a primary source of information on jazz and other kinds of repertoire. They provide a useful framework for creating anthologies. They also serve as models to follow in terms of notation, chord symbols, use of alternate harmonizations, and the inclusion of elements such as hits, breaks and rhythm section accompaniment in a lead sheet.

*The Real Book*, an unauthorized anthology of standards and jazz compositions is “one of the most widely used and influential books in the world of jazz.”¹¹ A short foreword explains the format, selection and editing of tunes, and information on its sources. It is followed by an alphabetical index of all compositions. The lead sheets of over four hundred compositions occupy most of the publication. Selected repertoire combines standards taken from sources such as Broadway musicals or Hollywood movies with jazz compositions. The repertoire selection process used for this publication seems at times arbitrary, and a sizeable amount of the compositions it compiles had not achieved standard status by the time of its publication. It seems difficult to justify the inclusion of some of those compositions, many of which were authored by Berklee School of music students and faculty of the ‘70s, in a jazz anthology. The book does not include information on how to perform different genres. Some information on style or tempo is included in most but not all lead sheets. Many errors both in melodic content and harmony have been observed since its publication, but it set a standard for similar publications afterwards, and it is still widely used.

In the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, Sher Music Company published an authorized anthology of standards and jazz-related repertoire in three volumes: *The New Real Book*

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volumes 1-3. Following The Real Book’s footsteps, the series includes standards taken from Broadway musicals, film soundtracks, popular songs of varied origins and jazz compositions from the ‘40s into the ‘90s. Its subtitle, “Jazz classics, choice standards, pop-fusion classics for all instrumentalists and vocalists,” is a good description of most of its content and the public it is conceived for. The New Real Book series is not instrument-specific, and it has different styles of notation depending on the nature of the musical material presented. In standards that originated from jazz compositions, notation is detailed and often complex, including as much information as possible on all musical elements related to the composition. On the other hand, when notating songs other than jazz compositions, melodies are presented with the simplest possible rhythmic values, leaving performers the freedom to improvise or prepare their own versions.

Endorsements from major figures in the jazz performance and jazz education areas are included in the first pages, as well as two general indexes: a classified index by genre and composer, and an alphabetical index by composition.

The publisher’s foreword describes the method used for researching each composition: a historical approach was used combining different recorded versions to arrive at a final product. Music Editor Bob Bauer transcribed jazz classics and other repertoire included in the New Real Book. This stands in contrast to the anonymity that still obscures the origin of The Real Book. Legal authorizations to include their work were obtained from the owners of each composition included in this series.

The musical editor’s foreword is of great importance to this research project. His description of the process of repertoire selection, research method and editorial criteria used sets a model to which any comparable anthology should conform. Each section of
this foreword yields a wealth of information on how to approach a task of this magnitude. Of particular interest is his analysis of the validity of published sources and the decreasing amount of trust he placed in sources such as: composer’s lead sheet (most trustworthy) to fake books (least trustworthy) with intermediate steps such as published lead sheet, publisher’s lead sheet and published transcription. In his selection of recorded sources he also considered factors such as historical importance and influence, clarity and consistency, applicability to small group settings and how each source agreed with the others. All these criteria are pertinent to the research project intended by this author.

The “General Rules” section explains how to use the book, and is divided into six subsections: form, chords, terms, transposition, abbreviations, ornaments & symbols. A list of chord symbols used is also included. Most lead sheets include information on style, tempo, composer and source. The Appendix at the end shows rhythm patterns used in different compositions or styles.

In 2006 Jazz scholar Barry Kernfeld published a revised second edition of The Story of Fake Books, a study in which he traces the history of these publications from the ’40s to the making of the ’70s unlicensed Real Book at Berklee School of Music. He points out that the notation used for fake books evolved from grand-staff piano arrangements. They later included guitar or ukulele tablature, and were finally simplified into what are now known as lead sheets.

Kernfeld shows the evolution of chord symbol notation, from its basic origins to the highly detailed notation of chord qualities, extensions and inverted or alternate bass notes found in contemporary fake books. He also traces historical changes in the elements notated in such publications. A large section of the book studies The Real Book and its
creation by unidentified Berklee students in the mid ‘70s. Most of the information included by Kernfeld on the subject comes from interviews with first hand witnesses of the process such as Pat Metheny.

Venezuela’s neighbor Brazil has produced several anthologies of its popular music. Almir Chediak, a Brazilian composer and guitarist, undertook a vast editorial effort in this direction spanning several decades. He issued five volumes of songbooks documenting mainstream bossa nova repertoire, as well as many other volumes of anthologies dedicated to major Brazilian composers such as Vinicius de Moraes, Tom Jobim, Djavan, Caetano Veloso and Chico Buarque amongst others. The author’s foreword states his goal of absolute fidelity to the composers’ work in terms of harmony, melody rhythms, and lyrics.

Mr. Chediak’s transcriptions are indeed very detailed. They include precise information on the specific rhythmic values and styles used by performers in the original recordings. This approach, while musically accurate, gives musicians and vocalists little freedom to improvise or create their own versions while reading from Chediak’s lead sheets. Mr. Chediak’s publications are an interesting reference for a contemporary anthology of popular music outside of the USA. His approach of editing thematic volumes by genre or composer with no more than sixty or seventy compositions offers a different perspective to the large all-encompassing anthology style of the Real Books. According to the foreword, in Mr. Chediak’s research process for his series of songbooks, he received collaboration from many performers and composers, both in the selection of the repertoire and in the actual writing and revision of the music. The composers’ collaborations led him to prioritize their input even above the most famous recorded
versions of the compositions included in his books. He narrates several instances in which composers did not consider famous recordings of some of their well-known compositions to be definitive sources, and offered corrected versions. Another interesting instance in which his work brought changes to the canon is shown by the song *Feio não é bonito*: the revision and transcription process revealed a clash between a chord and the melody. When consulted, the composer decided to change the melody note and keep the chord. So the score of that song provided by Mr. Chediak has a slightly different melody than the one everyone has always associated it. The content of Mr. Chediak’s book goes beyond the anthology. He was also interested in the origin and evolution of the music. That led him to include interviews and photographs. The author reflects on the genre of *bossa nova* and its impact and historical permanence.

Each volume of Mr. Chediak *bossa nova* anthologies includes the index of all five volumes in the preliminary pages, and an alphabetical index by song title. Each song presents a full list of the chords used in tablature. Then the song is notated in two ways: the first notation style offers the lyrics and chord symbols above them, such as is often found in guitar books. The second includes the notated melody in one staff and chord symbols above in a “real book” style. The authors of both lyrics and music are listed as well as copyright ownership. Information on the form is provided as well as lyrics, melody, chord symbols and guitar tablature. The final pages include a biographic note on the author, an index by composer, and the English translation of the interviews that appear at the beginning of each volume.

In 1997 Sher Music Company published an anthology of Latin American repertoire entitled *The Latin Real Book*. It includes classic and contemporary pieces from
different musical traditions: Brazilian, Salsa, Latin Jazz and Latin American popular music amongst others. It follows the same editorial standards mentioned above for The New Real Book. None of the compositions selected for this study are included, but similar compositions from other Latin American countries are.

The publisher’s foreword stresses how the music included in this book is part-oriented, meaning that each instrument has a specific role to play in the ensemble in terms of the rhythmic structure of each genre. It gives a discography reference for the whole book. The musical editors’ forewords offer insights into the need for well-notated lead sheets for Latin American repertoire. The preliminary pages also include notes on the rhythmic styles, information on the clave12 and how these are specified in the scores, and a basic vocabulary of terms used in the book. Appendix one includes information on how to perform different genres, styles, and some specific compositions, in rhythm section instruments. Appendix two lists the sources for the repertoire. This book is a useful reference for a performer’s guide to music that comes from Latin America.

In 2006 Guillermo McGill and Blanca Castillo published a Flamenco jazz real book13. This anthology includes music by composers such as Carles Benavent, Jorge Pardo, Perico Sambeat and Mr. McGill. It features sixty-five compositions, a similar amount to those featured in Mr. Chediak’s volumes, and most of the music included is strongly associated with Spanish genres, such as tanguillo and bulería to name a few. Little information is offered on how to perform specific genres, or on which versions the transcriptions are based. Melodies, chord symbols and some bass lines are provided. I

12. For explanations of different types of clave, see Table x in Chapter Four.
compared some of these transcriptions to recorded versions of the same compositions and found important differences in terms of form and melody.

Jazz instructional material has often had to find a way to use standards without violating copyright laws. A good example of this practice is Greg Fishman’s series of publications for Jazz Saxophone. Each volume features ten or more etudes for jazz saxophone, or a similar amount of jazz saxophone duets. They have been conceived so that all saxophonists (soprano, alto, tenor, baritone) read the same written part, while the rhythm section transposes the accompaniment to accommodate the saxophonist's range. Each book comes with CDs in which each etude or duet is demonstrated by a saxophonist, often the author himself. All tracks feature rhythm section accompaniment for improvisation purposes. Each of the etudes and duets that I reviewed from these books uses harmonic sequences from standards found in the jazz repertoire. They all provide new melodic material over those changes and are examples of the use of “contrafact” melodies as a jazz teaching strategy.

Reference Books and Articles on Jazz, Latin Jazz, Latin American Music and World Music

The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz, edited by Barry Kernfeld is an encyclopedic dictionary of jazz. It does not include articles on Venezuelan music, Venezuelan jazz or major Venezuelan musical figures related to jazz. It does not include any articles specifically on world music. The lack of entries is proof of the need to document Venezuelan repertoire, genres and composers.

The Garland Handbook of Latin American Music, as stated by its title, is a description of music in Latin America. It includes one CD with audio examples. The first two chapters offer introductory information into the role of music in Latin America and different issues related to the general geographical and demographic elements of Latin America and to different issues relative to music in the Americas. There is a thematic alphabetical index at the end.

Part three, “National and Musical Traditions,” includes chapters on most countries in Latin America, grouped by geographical zones. The article on Venezuelan music is the first one in the section that reviews music from South America. The article’s author is ethnomusicologist Dr. Max H. Brandt. When he describes traditional Venezuelan music, he frequently mentions works by Isabel Aretz and Luís Felipe Ramón y Rivera, two pioneering Venezuelan musicologists cited in other entries in this chapter. No notated musical examples are provided. Some of the illustrations are photographs of performers.

Dr. Brandt classifies Venezuelan folk music as indigenous music (pre-Columbian) and folk music. In the section that covers folk music he offers a classification of local instruments in three varieties: chordophones, membranophones and aerophones. In the “musical contexts” section the author classifies music according to its social function: secular music, music from folk Catholicism and popular music. There is a short annotated bibliography at the end of the article, as well as a brief reference list.

In his article “Sitars and Bossas: World Music Influences,” author Pedro Van der Lee offers a history of the term world music since it first appeared in the ‘80s, and a
useful classification of the different kinds of music grouped within that term. Most of the music selected for this essay falls within one of the different categories Mr. Van der Lee defines. The article offers a critical view of the way world music is valued, and shows an open mind to the process of transformation that most of it is going through under the influence of Western music and of each other. It also mentions that the influence is mutual, since Western music has also been transformed by world music. This article is a good reference for the “need for the study” section of this essay.

Peter Burkholder’s article “Music of the Americas and Historical Narratives” studies how most of the textbooks and narratives about the history of music approach the music of the Americas. It also traces parallelisms between the history of music in Europe and in its American colonies. Its historical perspective is useful to define the need for this essay. The author is an important music scholar, the coauthor of the 8th edition of *A History of Western Music* with Donald Grout and a contributor to the Grove Dictionary of Music.

Luc Delannoy, a contemporary French music critic offers in his two books *¡Caliente!: Una Historia del Jazz Latino* and *Carambola: Vidas en el Jazz Latino*, an overview of the relationship between jazz and Latin music. The second book is conceived as a complement to the first, and their combined scope includes the history of Latin jazz from the early stages of the 20th century to the first years of the 21st century.


In the second book there is a section on national approaches to Latin jazz from a half-dozen countries. It does not include an entry on Venezuelan Jazz. The author also offers interesting reflections on the need to free Latin jazz from bebop, from Afro Cuban rhythms and from the clave. This book is a useful tool to measure the importance of Latin American input in the history of jazz.

John Roberts published several books on jazz, black music, Latin music and Latin jazz. He was an ethnomusicologist, music producer and music critic born in the United Kingdom but based in the United States. Three of them: The Latin Tinge, Black Music of Two Worlds: African, Caribbean, Latin, and African American Traditions and Latin Jazz are relevant to this essay.\(^{18}\)

The first book, The Latin Tinge is a revised and updated second edition. As stated by its subtitle, The Impact of Latin American Music in the United States, it is mostly concerned with the influence of Latin American music in mainstream U.S. musical culture. No mentions of music from Venezuela were found in the book. The second book is a history of music of African origins in the Americas. It includes a chapter on South American black music, and several mentions of Venezuelan rhythms and traditions. Mr. Roberts states that many of the drums used in those traditions come from Western Africa, and that they are virtually unchanged from their original African ancestors, both in their construction and in the music performed with them.

His third book, subtitled “the first of the fusions,” is mostly interested with the history of the relationship between jazz and the music from Cuba, Brazil, Argentina and Mexico. As in the first book, there is no mention of Venezuela in the index.

Each volume includes an Index, a selected bibliography and a discography. The first volume in this list also has a list of sources, and its discography is classified by country of origin, including a short section on Venezuelan recordings.

Chilean musicologist Christian Spencer Espinoza visited Venezuela in 2010 to attend a conference on popular Latin American music. He wrote an article about his visit in which he reviews the current state of Venezuelan music and gives an account of the evolution of traditional and popular Venezuelan music.

**Venezuelan Music: Books, Articles And Anthologies**

A Venezuelan non-profit cultural organization dedicated to promoting Venezuelan music, the Fundación Bigott, edited in the late ‘90s an Encyclopedic Dictionary of Venezuelan Music. Ambitious in scope, it covers biographies and varied subjects within folk, popular, jazz, experimental and classical music. It provides information on all periods of Venezuelan music from pre-Columbian times to the late ‘90s, and it is the most thorough and complete publication on Venezuelan music and musicians I encountered during my research. The quality and style of the different articles are extremely varied. This publication is out of print, no new editions have been issued, and Mrs. Nancy Zavac, Music Librarian at the Marta and Austin Weeks Music Library at

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the University of Miami confirmed in an email to me that the Library has tried to purchase it unsuccessfully, since no vendors are available. It includes an introduction that offers an overview of the history of musicological studies in Venezuela and on subjects relative to musical archives and printing. The directors’ foreword narrates the process by which the encyclopedia was edited and the musicological criteria followed. A list of contributors is provided in the introductory pages, as well as a list of abbreviations used.

This publication does not include photographs or illustrations, and it offers few musical notation examples. It does not contain any appendices. Each article includes its bibliographies or list of sources.

A good example of available publications of Venezuelan popular and folk music standards can be obtained from *Perlas Musicales Venezolanas*, a short booklet that includes twenty-two compositions. It offers a short foreword on how the effort to divulgate Venezuelan music was the motivation for editing and publishing this book. Each composition includes melody and chord symbols, as well as tablature for the *cuatro*. I scanned through the compositions and found problems such as minor chords harmonizing a melody on the major third, lack of clarity in the use of key signatures, poor use of musical fonts, and questionable choices in rhythmic notation. Each composition includes title, genre, composer and author. In some cases the lyrics are provided in a separate page. *Merengues* are notated in 2/4 meter, the first beat occupied by a triplet and the second by two eighth notes. In Chapter Four of this essay a discussion of appropriate notation practices for *merengues* is provided, and this is not one of the recommended options.

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A short appendix includes tablature chords for the *cuatro* and chords for keyboard, with dots on the keys that should be played. This publication is designed to serve a beginner-level instructional purpose.

Saúl Vera’s method for the *bandola Llanera*, a four-string instrument of the lute family used in the Venezuelan and Colombian plains\(^{22}\) starts with a short foreword with biographic information on its author.\(^{23}\) It has detailed information on some of the most important genres and fixed harmonic subgenres in traditional Venezuelan music. It provides sheet music with chord structures for genres such as *Zumba que zumba*, *Pajarillo*, *Seis por Derecho* and local variations on these and other genres. Mr. Vera’s book also includes an introductory section on the history of the *bandola* and its evolution from Spanish string instruments introduced in Venezuela during Spain’s conquest and colonization of South America. It is an important reference to use for the Notation of Venezuelan genres.

Since it published its first CD in 2002, *Venezuela Demo*, a Venezuelan group of musicians and music experts, has been continually issuing a collection of contemporary recordings by Venezuelan performers.\(^{24}\) It consists of thirty-four CDs and is constantly updated. Each CD features ten to twenty-five compositions by different performers, all recorded in the year 2000 or later. Each volume features different performers. Almost seven hundred performers are listed. New volumes have been issued every year since

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\(^{23}\) Saúl Vera, *Método para el aprendizaje de la Bandola Llanera* (Caracas, Fundarte, 1982).

2002. This abundance of music recorded by contemporary performers is a helpful overview of the 21st century music scene in Venezuela.

The Vicente Emilio Sojo Foundation, FUNVES, issued a contemporary catalog of CDs issued in Venezuela.25 It has both a printed and an online version, and is frequently updated with new recordings. The information it provides includes track lists, album covers, credits, audio and data on performers (both groups and individual artists), composers and producers. The music included in the CDs is classified according to the following categories: traditional music of known authors, traditional music of unknown authors, popular music of known authors and popular music of unknown authors. It is a useful discography of Venezuelan recordings.

Vicente Emilio Sojo published in 1940 a short anthology or compilation of Venezuelan popular songs.26 Mr. Sojo was a seminal figure in Venezuelan music, who founded the first local symphonic orchestra, the Orquesta Sinfónica de Venezuela, and taught at the most important local music conservatory at that time, the Escuela Superior de Música de Caracas. In this book, the compositions are presented in the form of melodies with piano accompaniments arranged by the author. No chord symbols are provided. Mr. Sojo stated in his foreword that within the repertoire of popular Venezuelan songs he chose the older ones for publication in this first notebook. He also describes the Venezuelan accents in this music by mentioning its melodic development, rhythmic accompaniment patterns, chord progressions and mood. He mentions the


26. Vicente Emilio Sojo, Primer Cuaderno de Canciones Populares Venezolanas (Caracas: Biblioteca Venezolana de Cultura, 1940).
influence of popular Venezuelan guitarists of his era in his piano arrangements, and states that he tried to imitate their style when he harmonized the melodies. Most compositions are anonymous, but when the authors were known they are mentioned. Two remarkable aspects of the notational style are the common use of two superposed time signatures (3/4 and 6/8), and the use of a 2/4, with the first beat a triplet and the second two eighth notes, to notate the “guasas,” a genre mentioned as a precursor to the Venezuelan merengue.²⁷ Songs that come from Afro-Venezuelan traditions are notated in a more syncopated style. Some melodies are notated in treble clef and others in bass clef, reflecting male or female singes. Each song includes title, composer if known, and a subtitle that describes the genre.

In 2006 Venezuelan drummer and percussionist Miguel Hernández self-published a book that features adaptations of Afro-Venezuelan rhythms, originally performed by polyrhythmic sets of drums of African origin, to the contemporary drum set²⁸. Preliminary pages include information on the author and a short historical overview of the use of Afro-Venezuelan rhythms in the drum set. Its three appendices feature a recommended discography, an explanation of the symbols and notation used for the drum set and a glossary of terms. Well researched and scholarly, and very practical as well. It is a good reference on how to design a performer’s guide for Venezuelan music. Its scope is limited to the drum set and specifically to Afro-Venezuelan rhythms. Non-Afro-Venezuelan genres such as merengue and joropos are not described.

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In 2007 Venezuelan flutist Andrés Eloy Rodríguez published a master’s thesis designed to identify which elements of Venezuelan music can be used in the process of instrumental instruction for intermediate level flutists.29 The author, a flutist with the Venezuelan Symphonic Orchestra, identifies four Venezuelan musical genres to use within a didactic context: joropo, merengue, danza Zuliana and vals.30 His choice is based on the need to limit the scope of his research, and on the importance of these four genres within the Venezuelan tradition. I found this choice to be well informed and used it as one of the main references for the selection of genres to be included in this essay. However, none of the compositions used by Mr. Rodríguez were included in this essay.

In his thesis, Mr. Rodríguez discusses previous efforts to use South American genres within the context of flute instruction, mentioning works such as Astor Piazzola’s Seis Estudios Tanguísticos para Flauta Sola amongst others. A lengthy and well researched work, it includes interviews with important Venezuelan Classical flutists that have performed Venezuelan popular and folk music with their instruments, as well as an overview of current research on the subject. Of particular interest are the author’s definitions of Venezuelan genres. A certain amount of compositions representative of each genre are selected for the study from traditional and contemporary authors.

This research also offers a historical overview of the development of the flute as the main melodic instrument used by current small ensembles dedicated to the Venezuelan repertoire, as well as a thorough description of similar groups contemporary


30. The danza Zuliana is a genre that shares certain characteristics with the gaita (see Chapter Four): they both are from the state of Zulia, on the northwestern part of Venezuela, and they both are in 6/8 meter. Peñín and Guido, Enciclopedia de la Música en Venezuela.
to the period in which the research was made, some of which are of an experimental
to the period in which the research was made, some of which are of an experimental
nature. Mr. Rodríguez’s work compares technical elements in classical etudes and in the
repertoire he chose for his study, and he points out the challenges a musician faces
dealing with the rhythmic structure of the merengue and the syncopated rhythms present
in most Venezuelan music. This dissertation offers a great amount of useful information
for the study of Venezuelan music. His choice of genres is a good point of departure for
designing a performer’s guide to Venezuelan music. The repertoire is an interesting mix
of traditional, well-known compositions with more contemporary and experimental
music. Some of the compositions included in this doctoral essay are also part of the
selected repertoire in Mr. Rodríguez’s Thesis.

In a 2003 article Venezuelan scholar José Peñín reflects on the nature of popular
music in general and the place it occupies in Venezuela.31 He applies the term
mesomúsica (“mesomusic” or “middlemusic”) taken from current musicological practice,
to define the music of the masses, found in the middle between the extremes of the
“cultivated” or “superior” classical music and folklore. Mr. Peñín reflects on the
definition of the term “popular” in Spanish, a term that carries two connotations: the first
is “widely known” and the second points to a “lower class” origin. He prefers the
definition música popular de masas, which translates as “popular music of the masses.”
Mr. Peñín tries to discuss these forms of music without assessing their value, and signals
how the negative view of the value of popular music, as opposed to classical and folk

31. José Peñín, “Música Popular de Masas, de Medios, Urbana o Mesomúsica Venezolana,” Latin
http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=3&hid=19&sid=03e6760a-11fd-4fb5-9dca-
407cf8244b6b%40sessionmgr12&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=rih&AN=2003-
02095 (accessed September 26, 2012).
music, has made an imprint on its study, as it has been deemed unworthy of attention. He reflects on the history of Venezuelan musical institutions and how none of them showed interest for these forms of music. The author then divides popular music in two major categories: the first includes music with local (national) origins and the second music with external (international) origins. He then goes on to study the former in depth, and starts with an interesting historical overview of band music in Venezuela.

One of the genres I study in this essay is the Venezuelan merengue and it is also one of the genres analyzed in depth by Mr. Peñín. The author shows its relationship with band music. He also signals how the repertoire created for wind band was a source for songs that became Venezuelan standards, such as Alma Llanera and a couple of other songs included in the selected repertoire for this doctoral essay. He observes that local band music adopted Venezuelan genres and that a sizeable amount of Venezuelan popular repertoire was either created for bands or famously adapted for them.

The article continues with a discussion of local ensembles such as the estudiantinas (a pulsated-string instruments ensemble) and orquestas típicas, which use local instruments and local genres. It explains the term música cañonera (cannon music): the bands that performed this style did so in the streets, and announced their presence with loud fireworks, hence the term “cañonero,” stemming from the word cañón, which means cannon. This article studies the evolution and repertoire of local vocal and chamber music groups that cultivated local genres. It is enlightening in its thorough study of the history of Venezuelan popular music, its performers, composers, genres and ensembles. It also mentions the relationship between popular music and radio and TV, and it ends with a brief description of contemporary explorations of Venezuelan music in
experimental and jazz contexts. This article is a very useful tool for the understanding of the contemporary popular Venezuelan music and its history. This article is a very useful tool for the understanding of the contemporary popular Venezuelan music and its history.

In his foreword, Mr. Ramón y Rivera describes his 1969 book, *Música Folklórica de Venezuela* as a “panoramic work on our (Venezuelan) folk music.” He cites similar works published in Cuba, Brazil and Spain as the inspiration for this book. The book includes photographs and examples with musical notation. All musical examples come from field recordings compiled by Mr. Ramón y Rivera himself or a half dozen of local collaborators including his wife, Isabel Aretz, a very important musicologist in her own right. Each musical example includes detailed information on source, location, and person responsible for recording or transcribing the music. Some examples have an archive number.

The book is divided into five chapters, and offers an interesting classification of genres based on their function. Each chapter studies genres such as lullabies and children’s songs, work songs, devotional songs and genres and music for festivities and parties. The last chapter studies “indigenous” music, made by local Native Americans. Each genre has a detailed explanation and historical background. It is a very thorough and scholarly book, and very useful to determine the origin and evolution of many local genres.

Mr. Rivera’s book includes many transcriptions of musical examples, melodies, and patterns performed by percussion instruments. Most transcriptions include lyrics, but none uses chord symbols. Sometimes notated chords are provided in the accompaniment

32. Ramón y Rivera, *Música Folklórica de Venezuela*. 
part. Polyrhythmic drum patterns are notated in multiple staffs, where each staff represents one of the drums in a combination of drums, such as the three-drum *culo'e puya* drum ensemble. This is a well-researched scholarly book on Venezuelan popular music. The author is one of the main music scholars in Venezuelan history.

In his opening statement Mr. Ramón y Rivera defines his 1962 article *Rhythmic and Melodic Elements of Venezuelan Negro Music* as a description of different African-Venezuelan drum rhythms that were still in the process of being classified at the time it was published.³³ It is another example of his groundbreaking work in Venezuelan musicology.

The study defines any songs or “beats” accompanied by such drums as *golpe*. Mr. Rivera describes different *golpes* from different parts of the Venezuelan geography. The article does not include notated examples, although he offers references to the recordings and transcriptions from which the research was based. The analysis of the different rhythms touches on the instrumentation used, tonal or modal nature of the melody, and vocal harmonies. The author tries to describe verbally the nature of the songs and rhythms.

Mr. Juan Liscano’s liner notes to *Folk music of Venezuela* feature detailed verbal descriptions of each audio example in this collection.³⁴ Mr. Liscano, a well-known Venezuelan poet, writer and intellectual, gathered in the ‘30s and ‘40s what was maybe the first important archive of recordings of popular and folk music from Venezuela. Even

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though he was not a musicologist and his descriptive style is more literary and sociological than scholarly or musical, his work is very serious, and the “liner notes” are in fact a short essay on Venezuelan genres of his era. It offers the oldest description available of these genres and helps traces their evolution. Each example includes information on location, performers, instrumentation and the month and year when the recording was made. A description of the instruments on which the music is performed and the techniques used by the performers is often included for each example, as well as the lyrics when present.

Colombian pianist Claudia Calderón has dedicated a good amount of her performing career to the adaptation of the joropo to the piano. Mrs. Calderón has been publishing studies on the Venezuelan joropo since the ‘80s, and she is still active as a performer, clinician and scholar. She is married to Franco-Venezuelan composer and Cellist Paul Dessene, who has been her collaborator in some of her articles and recordings. Mrs. Calderón’s website offers a wealth of information and includes many of her publications.35

In her article on the relationship between the golpe corrido and the golpe de seis, Mrs. Calderón classifies different joropo varieties in two main groups.36 She uses the term golpe corrido or golpe corrío to group all forms of the joropo that imply a 3/4 meter, and defines those that imply a 6/8 meter as golpe de seis. She offers definitions for different


subgenres, studies the alternation of 3/4 and 6/8 forms within certain joropo varieties, and includes a catalog of joropo forms with their harmonic cycles.

In another article, Mrs. Calderón studies the use of the low register of the Venezuelan harp. The low strings of the harp are called bordones, hence the term bordoneo to describe the use of those strings in the accompaniment of certain sections of some subgenres of the joropo. A good amount of Mrs. Calderón’s work as a performer has been directed to adapting the melodic and harmonic practices found in the Venezuelan harp to the piano, and this article shows her knowledge of this matter.

Mrs. Calderón also published a lecture on the history and transformation of the joropo from 1948 to 1998. There she draws parallels between the blues and the joropo, both being folk originated with rural origins and an urban development.

Her work is especially relevant to this research since her interest in the joropo is based on an instrumental approach. In her webpage she offers transcriptions of different forms of the joropo, to which she adds chord symbols. Mrs. Calderón’s articles show her passion for this genre and a depth of knowledge of the subject. They are not scholarly in style or ambition, and they feature personal perceptions of the aesthetics of the works she describes. As a critic, she attributes a higher value to works that come from a traditional perspective, or to the artistically adventurous and experimental. On the other hand she gives lesser importance to works she considers as conceived for commercial purposes.


CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

The purpose of this essay was to create a jazz performer’s guide to Venezuelan music. Similar guides reviewed in the previous chapter usually offer a repertoire as well as information on how to perform different styles and genres. This chapter describes procedures I used to provide both, and thus addresses the research questions stated in Chapter One:

1. Which compositions and genres should be included in a performer’s guide to Venezuelan music?
2. What is the best way to present the selected compositions in terms of harmony, melody, and other musical elements?
3. Which traditional subgenres should be represented?
4. What information should be included on how to perform the different genres?

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first gives an overview of the methods used for assembling a viable repertoire for this guide. The second describes the selection process used to identify relevant information on the stylistically correct performance of Venezuelan genres.

Repertoire-Related Issues

The repertoire included in this essay was chosen through a long and complex process. This section describes the techniques used for repertoire selection, source selection and repertoire transcription, the efforts undertaken to receive authorization to
use copyright-protected material, and the creative process by which the repertoire included in this essay was put together. It also addresses issues related to the notation and presentation of the music.

Repertoire Selection

The first goal of this research was to determine which genres and compositions should be included in this performer’s guide. I initially intended to compile an anthology of Venezuelan standards, considering that the most often-recorded compositions would also be the most worthy to use as the repertoire for this guide. However, Venezuelan composers’ output includes music rooted in their country’s musical traditions as well as music composed in genres that originated from other countries (such as salsa, bolero, Anglo-Saxon pop and rock, jazz, etc.). Popular compositions such as *Moliendo café*, *Llorarás*, and *Motivos* belong to the latter group, and they show that the most often-recorded compositions by Venezuelan authors are a mix of many local and international genres.\(^\text{39}\) It was thus important to determine the genre of the music that should be included in this guide before selecting specific compositions. After reviewing publications from Spain and Brazil with similar ambitions to this essay, I found that they included mainly music that was strongly characteristic of their local genres and styles.\(^\text{40}\)

\(^{39}\) None of the three compositions mentioned in the paragraph is an example of traditional Venezuelan genres. Harpist Hugo Blanco composed *Moliendo café*, and although the original recording by the composer uses traditional Venezuelan instruments, the composition is in 4/4 and uses a rumba clave. It does not belong to any traditional Venezuelan genre. Llorarás, composed by Oscar D’Leon, was recorded in *Dimension Latina 75*, and it is one of the best-known salsa hits around the world. Motivos is a bolero (slow ballad of Caribbean origin) by Italo Pizzolante. Oscar D’Leon, *Dimension Latina 75*, Top Hits TH 1117, LP, 1975; Hugo Blanco, *Colección De Exitos, Vol.3*, Palacio, CD, 1998; La Rondalla Venezolana, *Rondalla Venezolana*, Palacio, 1973.
This guide will follow the same path, using only compositions and subgenres rooted in Venezuela’s musical traditions.

Once I made this choice, the scope of the music to be included still needed to be refined. Venezuelan musical traditions are vast, and probably not all local genres would be equally suitable for instruction. On the other hand, an overview of all Venezuelan genres would be beyond the scope of this study. During my research for the related literature review section of this essay, I found that the authors of some of the publications I studied have provided answers to the question of which Venezuelan genres are the most representative and useful for instruction. I decided to use some of the genres chosen by Mr. Andrés Rodríguez in his master’s thesis as the basis for repertoire selection. The genres chosen by Mr. Rodríguez are: merengue, danza Zuliana, joropo and vals. Since in my review of the Venezuelan vals I found no important characteristics that distinguish this genre from other international genres in 3/4, I decided to exclude it from this guide. I only selected the first two genres in Mr. Rodríguez’s list. The third genre I selected was the gaita, since it shares some rhythmic elements of the danza Zuliana mentioned by Mr. Rodríguez, and it has achieved a much broader significance in Venezuelan musical traditions. The importance of the gaita in Venezuelan music can be measured by the lengthy sections dedicated to this genre in the articles on Venezuelan music in The Garland Handbook of Latin American Music and in the Enciclopedia de la Música en


41. Andrés Eloy Rodríguez. “Utilización de Elementos de la Música Venezolana para la Enseñanza de la Flauta.”
Venezuela. All three selected genres, merengue, joropo and gaita, are also amply represented in the repertoire selection by the expert panel.

The next step in the repertoire selection process was to decide on a method for choosing the specific compositions. In an effort to arrive at a selection that presents a general consensus of important Venezuelan compositions, I considered several different methods of repertoire selection.

Initially, I planned to use Venezuelan discographies such as Venezuela Demo\textsuperscript{42} and Catálogo Discográfico de Venezuela\textsuperscript{43} to determine the amount of recordings of each composition. I would then use this information to select compositions with the most documented recordings as the basis for this anthology. I discarded this method after I reviewed those catalogs. They proved to be limited to short time periods and thus useless for the purpose of this essay. I then devised a different method to avoid any subjectivity in the repertoire selection process: a panel of experts was chosen and each asked to provide a list of compositions.

Expert Panel

A panel of experts was given the task of naming at least twenty, and up to fifty, important Venezuelan songs or instrumental compositions within the major traditional Venezuelan genres. This amount was chosen based on the example set by Almir Chediak in his Brazilian songbooks, in which he includes between fifty and seventy compositions.

\textsuperscript{42} Abzueta, Raúl, Germán Acero, Alejandro Calzadilla, and Luís Laya. “Venezuela Demo.”

\textsuperscript{43} Jinan Al-Shereidah. “Catálogo Discográfico de Intérpretes y Compositores Venezol@n@s.”
in each volume. Compositions selected by a greater number of experts would be included in the essay.

Experts in Venezuelan music were selected based on their reputation and proven knowledge of the field. The selection included notable instrumental and vocal performers, composers, arrangers, producers, writers, critics, journalists, radio hosts and important music teachers. They were contacted through email, and received an invitation to participate in the expert panel as well as an explanation of the nature of the requested collaboration. A full list of all the experts that were contacted is provided in Appendix B. Only nine of them provided the requested lists: Maria Eugenia Atilano, José Bracho, Prisca Dávila, María Eugenia Méndez, Gregorio Montiel Cuppello, César Orozco, Federico Pacanins, Roberto Todd and Saúl Vera.

Data Collecting Procedures Related to Expert Panel

The email sent to the expert panel had fifty empty spaces, and most of the responses received supplied that amount of compositions. A few provided less and only one provided more. The list of compositions selected by each panel member is provided in Appendix C. A total of two hundred and forty three different compositions were selected by at least one of the experts. Seventy-seven of those compositions were selected by at least two or more experts, and forty-six by three or more. All compositions in the latter group were initially selected to be included in the Anthology.

The information received in the responses obtained from the expert panel had to be verified, since some experts used different titles for the same song, often using the first line of the lyrics as the title of the composition. Some of them also provided ambiguous or erroneous information on the composers. I verified the authorship of each composition
and corrected their names. This was done mostly through consultation of online resources available through the University of Miami libraries’ website. During an interview in Caracas with SACVEN\textsuperscript{44} lawyers in October 2012, I obtained additional information concerning compositions with contested authorship. All of that data is included in tables 1-3.

**Expert Panel Results**

None of the compositions achieved unanimous selection by all the experts. Appendix C includes tables with detailed information on the experts’ selections. Responses received varied in length. They included compositions related to genres that were not within the limits I suggested.

In table 1 a slash separates different possible authors, when authorship of a composition is contested or unclear. The author to whom the composition is most often attributed appears before the slash sign, all others afterwards.

\textsuperscript{44} SACVEN is the acronym of \textit{Sociedad de Autores y Compositores de Venezuela}: The Society of Authors and Composers of Venezuela.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A tu regreso</td>
<td>Henry Martínez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acido</td>
<td>Adelys Freites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahora</td>
<td>Otilio Galíndez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcaraván</td>
<td>Simón Díaz</td>
</tr>
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<td>Alma Llanera</td>
<td>Pedro Elías Gutiérrez</td>
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<td>Amores de Cabré, Los</td>
<td>Enrique Hidalgo</td>
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<td>Anhelante</td>
<td>José “Pollo” Sifontes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ansiedad</td>
<td>J. E. Sarabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apure en un viaje</td>
<td>Genaro Prieto</td>
</tr>
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<td>Aquel Zuliano</td>
<td>Renato Aguirre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barlovento</td>
<td>Eduardo Serrano</td>
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<tr>
<td>Becerrito, El (La vaca mariposa)</td>
<td>Simón Díaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besos en mis sueños</td>
<td>Augusto Brandt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisas del Torbes</td>
<td>Luís Felipe Ramón y Rivera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisas del Zulia</td>
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<td>Camuri</td>
<td>Eduardo Serrano</td>
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<td>Canchunchú florido</td>
<td>Luís Mariano Rivera</td>
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<td>Caramba</td>
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<td>Catire, El</td>
<td>Aldemaro Romero</td>
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<td>Como llora una estrella</td>
<td>Antonio Carrillo</td>
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<td>Compadre Pancho</td>
<td>Lorenzo Herrera</td>
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<td>Concierto en la llanura</td>
<td>Juan Vicente Torrealba</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criollísima</td>
<td>Luís Laguna, Henry Martínez</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cumpleaños feliz</td>
<td>Luís Cruz</td>
</tr>
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<td>Curruchá, El</td>
<td>Juan Bautista Plaza/ Carlos Bonnet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dama Antañona</td>
<td>Francisco de Paula Aguirre and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leoncio Martínez</td>
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<tr>
<td>De conde a Principal</td>
<td>Aldemaro Romero</td>
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<tr>
<td>De repente</td>
<td>Aldemaro Romero</td>
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<td>Heraclio Fernández</td>
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<td>Epa Isidoro</td>
<td>Luís María Frometa</td>
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<td>Fiesta en Elorza</td>
<td>Eneas Perdomo</td>
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<td>Frailejón</td>
<td>Vytas Brenner</td>
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<td>Frutero, El</td>
<td>Cruz Felipe Iriarte</td>
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<td>Fuga con Pajarillo</td>
<td>Aldemaro Romero</td>
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<td>La cabra mocha</td>
<td>Pradelio Hernández</td>
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<td>La grey Zuliana</td>
<td>Ricardo Aguirre/ Marcial Valbuen</td>
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<td>Laguna vieja</td>
<td>Reynaldo Armas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucerito</td>
<td>Reynaldo Armas</td>
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<td>Author</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
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<td>Lucerito</td>
<td>Luis Mariano Rivera</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Maracaibo florido</td>
<td>Rafael Rincón González</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi querencia</td>
<td>Simón Díaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi mujer es caña dulce</td>
<td>Guillermo imenez Leal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi tripón</td>
<td>Otilio Galíndez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moliendo café</td>
<td>Hugo Blanco/ José Manzo Perroni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivos</td>
<td>Italo Pizzolante</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natalia Lauro</td>
<td>Antonio Lauro</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negrito fullero</td>
<td>Eurípides Romero</td>
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<td>Negro José, El</td>
<td>Aldemaro Romero</td>
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<tr>
<td>Niño lindo</td>
<td>Anonymous, complied by Vicente Sojo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norte es una quimera, El</td>
<td>Luís Fragachán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriente es de otro color</td>
<td>Henry Martínez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pajarillo</td>
<td>Folklore/ Anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poco a poco</td>
<td>Aldemaro Romero</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polo Margariteño</td>
<td>Folklore/ Anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Por alguien como tú</td>
<td>Ilan Chester/ Carlos Moreán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregones Zulianos</td>
<td>Rafael Rincón González</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presagio</td>
<td>Enrique Hidalgo</td>
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<td>Pueblos tristes</td>
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<td>Quinta Anauco</td>
<td>Aldemaro Romero</td>
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<td>Quitapesares</td>
<td>Carlos Bonnet</td>
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<td>Amable Torres</td>
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<td>Rosario</td>
<td>Ernesto Luís Rodríguez and Juan Vicente Torrealba</td>
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<td>Sentida Canción</td>
<td>Henry Martínez</td>
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<td>Sentir Zuliano</td>
<td>José Rodríguez and Norberto Pirela</td>
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<td>Señor Jou</td>
<td>Pablo Camacaro</td>
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<td>Serenata</td>
<td>Luís Laguna</td>
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<td>Sombra en los médanos</td>
<td>Rafael Sánchez López</td>
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<td>Son chispiitas</td>
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<td>Tonada de luna llena</td>
<td>Simón Díaz</td>
</tr>
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<td>Tu boca</td>
<td>Armando Molero</td>
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<td>Un heladero con clase</td>
<td>Luís Laguna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viva Venezuela</td>
<td>Jesús Rosas Marcano and Mitiliano Díaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zumba que zumba</td>
<td>Folklore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Source Selection

Once the selected repertoire was established, the next step in the research process was the choice of the sources for transcription. Online and printed discographies, as well as liner notes from CDs and LPs, were used to determine the first documented recordings of each composition. The Catalog of Venezuela’s National Library proved to be a very valuable database for finding this information. First versions, or recordings by the authors themselves, were used as sources for transcriptions. When later versions became significant references their contributions were also considered, following the source selection method outlined by Bob Bauer in his foreword to The New Real Book Vol. 1. In the case of traditional music of anonymous folkloric origin, versions by major Venezuelan singers, such as Cecilia Todd and Soledad Bravo, were preferred due to the quality of their work, their reputations, and their effort in preserving traditional Venezuelan music. Information on which versions were used as sources for the transcription of each selected song appears in Appendix C.

Transcription and Notation of Selected Repertoire

I transcribed melodies, bass lines and chord symbols from selected sources. When published transcriptions were available, I reviewed and compared them to my transcriptions. Some of the recordings from which the transcriptions were made present poor sound quality or a performance that often lacks rhythmic precision or clear intonation. In the case of the transcribed bass lines, often performed with acoustic bass or with the electro-acoustic upright bass used in Latin music and known as the “baby bass,” some notes or even whole fragments were impossible to distinguish. In the transcriptions provided in Appendix A unintelligible notes are notated with “x” noteheads.
Lead Sheet Design

After studying different models of sheet music used in available fake books, I chose a set of criteria for notation. It included the use of one-staff notation with key signature, time signature, and melody line. Chord symbols were added above the staff. In cases in which the bass line was essential to the composition, a bass clef staff was added.

When introductions and codas were strongly associated with the composition, they were also included in the lead sheet. Hits, breaks and rhythm section information were added above the staff. However, when they became an obstacle to adequate notation or sight-reading, a separate sheet for rhythm section was provided.

Copyright and Licensing Issues

After the repertoire was chosen, the process of research into the ownership of publishing rights to the compositions was undertaken. Most of the compositions do not appear on international publishing companies’ catalogs. SACVEN, the Venezuelan society of authors and composers, was contacted to determine copyrights and publishing ownership, as well as to obtain an authorization for academic use of sheet music of selected compositions. During the meeting held in October 2012, SACVEN’s lawyers informed me that Venezuelan law authorizes the use of copyrighted material for academic purposes. They accepted to grant a written authorization for the use of selected compositions for this essay. When I returned to the United States to continue my D.M.A. program at the University of Miami, I started a long exchange of emails with SACVEN’s lawyers. It did not yield any results. In their successive emails SACVEN’s lawyers continuously asked for additional documents and conditions to provide the authorization. Once it became clear that waiting for this authorization would hinder the timely
completion of this essay, I decided to include only selected compositions in public
domain, or those that had anonymous folkloric origin. I concluded that both groups
would be free from copyright issues. This decision was a major change in the focus of
this research, and the result of some of the work done previously transcribing the selected
repertoire could not be used directly in this essay. However, some of the information
gathered during the transcription process was used in the repertoire section (Chapter
Five), since it includes selected compositions in public domain. This information is also
present in the harmonic framework of contrafact melodies, and in the performance
guidelines section.

Appendix A includes transcriptions of selected compositions. Melodies have been
transformed into rhythmic notation to avoid copyright issues, but important information
on the chord progressions and bass lines is provided.

Contrafacts

After consulting with my advisor and doctoral committee on the problems
encountered with copyright authorizations for the use of selected compositions, it was
agreed that I would write new melodies to the harmonic sequences of some of the
selected compositions. These paraphrases of important selected compositions completed
the repertoire provided in this guide.

According to the Grove Music Online, within a jazz context a contrafact is “a
contrafact melodies to standard harmonic sequences is part of jazz tradition, and its use is
documented at least since the early stages of bebop. Jazz instructional publications, such as Greg Fishman’s series of saxophone etudes and duets, reviewed in Chapter Two, often use this device to avoid copyright issues. Contrafact melodies featured in this essay were composed adhering as closely as possible to the original genres, stylistic elements and harmonic sequences of the original compositions.

I chose four examples of gaita and another four of Venezuelan merengue for this purpose from the repertoire selected by the expert panel. Only one contrafact melody of the joropo was added to the repertoire, since the genre was already well represented by public domain compositions and songs of folkloric origin, as well as by its subgenres. In the creative process of writing the contrafact melodies I tried to preserve the characteristics I observed in the original compositions. Some of these characteristics are a certain naïve quality, the use of chord tones and sevenths in the melodies, the rhythmic approach as revealed by transcriptions, and the use of sequential motives. I respected these characteristics and the original chord progressions and structures, but in some cases I used reharmonization to obtain smoother bass lines or to make the melody note a chord extension. The total amount of compositions provided in this essay is similar to reviewed publications that use contrafact melodies, such as Greg Fishman’s series for saxophone.

Subgenres

Subgenres of the joropo, such as Zumba que zumba and Pajarillo are featured in the repertoire section. They are often harmonic sequences with standard melodic variations.

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46. Fishman, Greg, Dennis Luxion, Eric Hochberg, and Phil Gratteau, Jazz Saxophone Etudes.
Performance Guidelines Selection

In order to make this guide to Venezuelan music effective, I included information on how to perform chosen genres in jazz rhythm section instruments. I used the transcription of bass lines, chord sequences, comping patterns and melodic variations to identify and notate this information. A section on the analysis of performance practice as revealed by these transcriptions is included.
CHAPTER FOUR

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO SELECTED VENEZUELAN GENRES

This essay is primarily directed to performers, and it is mostly concerned with repertoire and performance practice guidelines. However, in order to put the repertoire and guidelines in context, a brief explanation of the basic characteristics of each selected genre is offered in this chapter. It is derived mainly from articles, dissertations and books reviewed in the second and third sections of Chapter Two. Musicological research on selected genres, as well as in-depth explanations of their history and evolution, are available in these publications and will not be discussed in this essay.

Terms used in Venezuelan Music

The words used to define forms, genres, styles, instruments, rhythms, sections and other musical elements in Venezuelan music can often be confusing. The same word can have different meanings in different musical contexts. This is especially true within the context of jorpos, where terms and definitions present great geographical and historical variations. The glossary provided in the preliminary pages to this essay is an effort to clarify the way these terms are used in this paper.

Venezuelan Merengue

Origins and History

According to Dr. Emilio Mendoza, “[t]he Venezuelan merengue is a completely different style of music from the homonymous genre of the Dominican Republic.”

Although they share the same name, they have no important musical characteristics in

common. In the same article Dr. Mendoza traces the evolution of the Venezuelan *merengue* from the late nineteenth century to the early twenty-first. He stresses its origin as a genre used to accompany dances in urban settings, initially associated mostly with bars and brothels. It later gained mainstream acceptance, and it is now one of the most important local genres. Many performers of traditional Venezuelan music have included *merengues* in their repertoire. This genre became so important that the *Enciclopedia de la Música en Venezuela* compares the relationship between this genre and the city of Caracas with similar pairings of Latin American cities and certain musical genres. Examples of such pairings include the relationship between Buenos Aires and the *tango*, and Rio de Janeiro and the *choro*.*sup48* The *merengue* became a symbol of the city, especially between the ‘20s and ‘40s, a period defined as the golden era of *merengues*.*sup49* There are many possible explanations advanced to explain the origin of the name *merengue*, but none has generated consensus between scholars.

### Instrumentation

The instrumentation used in *merengue* ensembles varies. In most of them, the *cuatro* is present to provide harmonic and rhythmic support. Melodies are either sung by vocalists or performed by brass or woodwind instrumentalists. Different kinds of percussion instruments are used to accompany *merengues*, such as the *charrasca*, the snare drum, and the contemporary drum set.*sup50*

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*49.* Ibid.

*50.* “The *charrasca*, also called *carrasca*, *carraca*, *cacho rayao*, *güiro*, *güirio* or *guacharaca*, among other names, can be made of wood, horn, gourd, metal or other materials. Grooves are made in the material, which is then stroked hard with a stick. This instrument, played by both blacks and Creoles, is used to accompany *guasas* and *fulías*, together with the *chimbanguel* drums and the *cuatro* when it serves
Notation

The correct notation of the Venezuelan *merengue* is a controversial issue, and it has generated many studies and debates. However, all notation systems devised by musicians and scholars to describe the rhythmic nature of the *merengue* have in common a five-note pattern. On this topic, Dr. Mendoza observes that “[t]he rhythm of *merengue* is traditionally written as a two-beat phrase, but a controversy exists as to how to transcribe it into music notation…many… scholars have continuously discussed it, not arriving at any agreement.”

He then goes on to mention the most important notation styles developed for *merengue*:

… there are three transcription options that can be used but none of them work efficiently to make the performed music sound as a *merengue venezolano*. It can be written in a two-fourth [sic] measure with triplets and two binary eighths notes or in a six-eighth meter as in the majority of Venezuelan music. But within the composers [sic], the trend has been to choose the five-eighth meter.

Although Dr. Mendoza finds fault with all of the above options, the last one he describes, using notation in 5/8, is the one most contemporary Venezuelan musicians choose. It is also the style used in this essay for all compositions and guidelines related to this genre.

The difficulty concerning the appropriate notation of the *merengue* is related to its evolution and the ambiguity in its performance practice. There are many intermediate, mixed, or undefined rhythmic interpretations of the *merengue*. “We find ourselves,” according to the *Enciclopedia de la Música en Venezuela*, “in front of the uncommon

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51. Mendoza, “*Merengue* Venezolano.”

52. Ibid.
case in which we cannot define a musical genre by its rhythmic structure.” In this respect, my transcriptions of selected *merengues* show that when composers wish to give pause to the melody, they often insert 6/8 bars and use dotted quarter notes in the melody. This is evident even in cases when the dominant rhythmic performance is clearly the 5/8 feel.

A common element found in *merengues* is the use of rhythmically active and syncopated melodies: “[m]erengue melodies are particularly lively and they astound by the rhythmic complexity provided by the uncommon bar subdivision in 5/8 and its possible subdivisions.”

Interesting but Unverified Hypothesis on the Merengue’s Rhythmic Evolution

According to several scholars, the accompaniment patterns and time signature in Venezuelan *merengue* evolved from an initial 6/8 feel. During my research for this essay I held several informal conversations with many performers of traditional Venezuelan music. The rhythmic evolution of the Venezuelan *merengue* was often one of the main topics of our discussions. One of the performers I spoke to suggested how the right hand movement of *cuatro* players might be at the root of the transition between the older 6/8 feel and the more modern 5/8 feel in *merengues*. As far as I know, this hypothesis has not been documented in any publication. I consider it interesting, and I have included it here so it is not lost.

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Example 1 shows a basic right-hand, five-stroke strumming movement performed on the *cuatro* in 6/8. Arrows represent right hand movement in *cuatro* performance.

**Example 1. Cuatro Right-Hand Movement in 6/8 Merengues**

Venezuelan music as shown in featured *gaita, merengue* and *joropo* transcriptions suffers from a certain *horror vacui*. According to the hypothesis, somewhere in the evolution of the *merengue, cuatro* players started to fill the empty space on beat 6 with a *repique* (fill) as shown in example 2.

**Example 2. Cuatro Right-Hand Movement in 6/8 Merengues, fill on beat 6**

The next step in the evolution of right-hand movement narrowed the pattern to the 5/8 version shown in example 3.

![Cuatro Right-Hand Movement in 5/8 Merengues, fill on beat 5](image)

There is a lot of merit in this hypothesis, and the drum patterns provided in example 64 (see Chapter Six) are reminiscent of the resulting *cuatro* accompaniment pattern shown above.

**Joropo**

According to *The Garland Handbook of Latin American Music* “[t]o most Venezuelan[s] the epitome of folk dance is the *joropo*, a music and dance influenced by both Africa and Europe and known as the national dance of Venezuela.” 56 There are many names for the musical forms that accompany *joropo* dances. The harmonic sequences of some of them are provided in the subgenres featured in Chapter Five. All of these musical forms can be described as *joropo*.

**Instrumentation**

*Joropos* are performed by different kinds of instrumental ensembles, but “for accompanying *joropos*, the plains harp ensemble is probably the most famous…” The standard instrumentation in this ensemble is a trio: *arpa llanera*, 57 *cuatro* and *maracas*. 58


57. In its article on the *arpa llanera*, *The Enciclopedia de la Música en Venezuela* states that the harp stands out amongst typical instruments used to perform Venezuelan popular music, especially in the *Joropo* repertoire. The Venezuelan harp is related to other diatonic harps introduced in Latin America through the Spanish conquest. It has almost five octaves and comes in two varieties: *arpa llanera* (nylon strings) and *arpa tuyera* (with more strings, high register strings are made of metal. See Peñín and Guido, *Enciclopedia de la Música en Venezuela*, 1:94-95.

58. The maracas are a musical instrument in which sound is produced by indirect percussion. The word *maraca* has indigenous origin, probably form the Arawak or Caribe tribes. These instruments are
A *bandola*, a more portable instrument, can be used as a substitute for the *arpa llanera*. These ensembles often feature vocalists who sing the melodies.

According to Mrs. Claudia Calderón, either the *arpa llanera* or the *bandola* would be the “major instrument” within these ensembles, providing at the same time melody, harmony and rhythm.\(^5^9\) The *cuatro* assumes a harmonic accompaniment role, and the *maracas* are purely percussive.

**Types of Joropo**

The Garland handbook offers a classification of *joropo* subgenres based on their geographical origin, and explains the differences between them. On the other hand, Mrs. Calderón classifies *joropos* in two groups, based on their rhythmic structure.\(^6^0\) The first group, *golpe corrido*, includes all forms in 3/4 meter. Important *joropo* subgenres featured in the repertoire section of Chapter Five, such as the *Zumba que zumba*, are considered *golpe corrido*. The second group consists of forms in 6/8 meter, and it is defined as *golpe de seis*. The *Pajarillo*, a form also included in Chapter Five, is considered a *golpe corrido*. When a *golpe corrido* and a *golpe de seis* are performed without interruption within the same piece, such as in the *Pajarillo con chipola*, it is necessary to include a transition in which one or two extra quarter notes are added. See performance guidelines in Chapter Six for more details.

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60. Calderón, “Sobre la Dialéctica entre el Golpe Corrido y el Golpe seis. Tipología Rítmica, Armónica y Estructural de los Golpes Llaneros.”
Rhythm and Meter

It is on the rhythmic aspects that the joropo shows its most interesting characteristics. The Garland Handbook of Latin American Music notes that music within this genre is “…rhythmically sophisticated, commonly notated with a double time signature of 3/4 and 6/8, producing polyrhythms and an always-present polymetric sense of simultaneous duple and triple figures (hemiola).”\textsuperscript{61} Slow or medium tempi are not used in joropos: “The tempo is always brisk.”\textsuperscript{62}

Polyrhythmic Structure

According to the Enciclopedia de la Musica en Venezuela, the joropo always superimposes 6/8 and 3/4 meters.\textsuperscript{63} The most interesting aspect of this superimposition is that these meters do not start at the same time.

In what Mrs. Calderón defines as golpe corrío (joropos in 3/4, also referred to by musicians and scholars as golpe or numerao), the cuatro performs a pattern of six steady eighth notes, in which the strokes one, two, four and five are open and strokes three and six are muted and accented.

Example 4. Cuatro Rhythmic Pattern, golpe corrío (3/4)

\begin{center}
\textbf{Example 4. Cuatro Rhythmic Pattern, golpe corrío (3/4)}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example4.png}
\end{center}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{61} Olsen and Sheehy, \textit{The Garland Handbook of Latin American Music}, 308.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{63} Peñín and Guido, \textit{Enciclopedia de la Música en Venezuela}, 1:73.
\end{flushright}
If the pattern shown in example 4 is simplified to notate only the accents, it becomes the figure shown in example 5.


On the other hand, Example 6 shows the rhythm performed by the bass and low strings of the harp.

Example 6. *Joropo* Bass Pattern

When examples 5 and 6 are combined in two-staff notation, the resulting pattern is a superimposition of simultaneous 6/8 and 3/4 meters as shown in example 7.

Example 7. Composite *Joropo* Rhythm, bass rhythmic pattern on bottom staff, *cuatro* rhythmic pattern on the top staff
The top staff in example 7 also represents the point of harmonic change for the *cuatro* or harp, even if the bass has already sounded the root of the chord on beat one.

*Transitions from Golpe to Estribillo and Vice Versa*

One of the most interesting phenomena that occur in *joropos* can be observed when a form or song alternates between sections in 3/4 and sections in 6/8. In such cases one or two beats are added, and the bass, harmonic downbeat and accents are all displaced.

Example 8 illustrates the transition from 3/4 to 6/8, using the patterns already shown in examples 4 and 6. A 1/4 bar is added just before the arrival of the section in 6/8. This allows the bass pattern to continue without interruptions.

Example 8. *Joropo*: Transition from 3/4 to 6/8

This transition can also be notated as a 4/4 bar as in example 9.

Example 9. Transition between 3/4 and 6/8, with an added 4/4 measure
In a similar manner, when the transition is from 6/8 to 3/4, two beats (shown in example 10 as a 2/4 bar) are added to avoid changes in the bass pattern.

Example 10. Transition from 6/8 to 3/4, with added 2/4 measure

These transitions are such that they do not impede the dancers’ flow of movement. The lower staff represents not only the bass figure but also foot movement in dance steps. A pattern of two consecutive quarter notes and a quarter note rest continues throughout the 6/8 patterns, the 3/4 patterns and the transitional measures, and it allows bass players and dancers to continue the same movement throughout.

**Gaita**

The term *gaita* is used in Venezuela to group different musical forms that originated in the northwest of the country. The best-known variety of *gaita* is the one practiced in the northern part of Lake Maracaibo, commonly called *gaita Maracaibera*, *gaita Marabina*, or *gaita de furro*. This is the variety studied in this essay. Used in this context, “the word *gaita* has no relationship with the homonymous [in Spanish] musical instrument,” known in English as bagpipes.64 The Garland handbook classifies this genre

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as a seasonal kind of music; “It is the gaita...that reigns at the end of the year” in most parts of the country.65

Instrumentation

Gaitas are accompanied by a “friction drum (furruco [also known as furro]) and drums called tambora.”66 The full traditional instrumentation for gaita ensembles is cuatro, furruco, tambora and charrasca, vocal soloist and choir. Contemporary gaitas have absorbed characteristics of other Caribbean cultures and they have become influenced by other genres, in particular by those grouped under the commonly used term salsa. Instrumentation is one of the areas in which gaitas have historically changed the most. In the final decades of the twentieth century, it incorporated the use of “electronic keyboards and other modern instruments in addition to the standard percussion.”67

Other Characteristics

Gaitas are in 6/8 meter and they have no fixed harmonic subgenres. From the harmonic and melodic perspective, each gaita represents a separate composition. Their formal structure is often divided into a verse sung by a soloist and a chorus sung by a choir.68 Some of the transcribed gaitas exhibit surprising harmonic rhythms in which some chords last more than two measures while others last less than a measure. Sections with uneven amounts of bars can also be found.

66. Ibid.
68. Peñín and Guido, Enciclopedia de la Música en Venezuela, 1:633-634.
General Considerations about Selected Venezuelan Genres

Rhythmic, Harmonic and Melodic Activity

Traditional Venezuelan music, at least as shown in compositions and genres selected for this essay, is very “active” in rhythmic, melodic and harmonic terms. Most selected compositions within the three chosen genres have intricate, fast-moving and often syncopated melodies, as well as harmonic sequences that move quickly from one chord to the next. These compositions also share time signatures that result in relatively “short meters”, such as 5/8, 6/8 and 3/4. Their tempos are at the least dynamic and often brisk. These common characteristics can be observed across all three selected genres.

My personal experience as a performer, confirmed by conversations with other Venezuelan musicians and by my experience teaching the World Music Ensemble at the Frost School of Music, has shown me the difficulty of performing Venezuelan genres with non-Venezuelan musicians. The speed at which measures move is one of the main aspects that both students and professional musicians from other cultures find awkward about Venezuelan music. This rate of change in measures applies by extension to melodies and harmonies. Furthermore, the musical characteristics that create the busy, “active” feel in these genres are not limited to time signatures and tempi. This sensation also comes from the one-bar accompaniment patterns that are used both in the merengue and the joropo, shown later in this chapter.

The active feel generated by “short meters” and one-bar patterns in Venezuelan genres stands in contrast to what happens in other Caribbean and South American traditions. To name an example, Cuban clave patterns are often notated in eighth-note subdivisions and in longer meters. This usually happens in two 4/4 bars (son and rhumba...
claves as shown in example 11) or in a 12/8 bar (clave Africana, example 12). There is an alternative one-bar notation style for Cuban claves in which the subdivision becomes the sixteenth note, also shown in example 11. In this case the pattern still feels as a two 2/4-bar structure with beats lasting twice as long as those in the 4/4 notation, and it is thus perceived as a longer rhythmic structure. The same can be said for the Brazilian clave used both in samba and bossa nova, in which the rhythmic pattern is a composite of two measures (see also example 11). These relatively more elongated rhythmic structures provide a background for melodies, harmonies and accompaniment patterns that is less active than the ones mentioned for Venezuelan genres.

Example 11. Clave Patterns in 4/4


70. Ibid.
Most of the accompaniment patterns included in Chapter Six for the joropo and the merengue are one-bar structures.

The Cuatro as the Common Element in the Instrumentation of all Selected Genres

It is interesting to note that all the genres selected for this guide share the use of the cuatro as an instrument that provides harmonic and rhythmic support. This proves the importance of this instrument in Venezuelan music, and shows how people from very different regions of the country use the cuatro in genres that otherwise do not have other common characteristics.

Example 12. Clave Africana Pattern in 12/8
CHAPTER FIVE

REPertoire

The repertoire provided in this section is the result of both the selection process and the creative efforts described in Chapter Three. It includes compositions of varied origins with two common characteristics. The first is their lack of copyright protection, either because they never possessed it, or because they are in public domain due to copyright expiration. The second characteristic they share is that they are transcriptions or contrafact melodies of some of the compositions included in the expert panel selection.

Origins of Featured Repertoire

All the material included in this chapter belongs to one of the following groups: 1) melodies of known origin whose copyright protection has expired, 2) contrafact melodies I wrote on the harmonic sequences of selected compositions or 3) melodies that come from folklore.

Each lead sheet provides melody, chord symbols and information on form, author, genre and suggested tempo. The repertoire is presented by genre. As discussed in Chapter Three, selected genres are gaita, joropo and merengue.

Featured Gaitas:

Featured Joropos:

1. *Barbarita*. Contrafact on *Apure en un viaje*.

Featured Merengues:

1. *El afilador de cuchillos*. Contrafact on *Un heladero con clase*.
2. *Una de aquí*. Contrafact on *Criollísima*.

The information on the lead sheets features melodies and harmonies transcribed from the sources described in Chapter Three. They include original recordings and landmark versions of these compositions. There are three joropo subgenres included in this chapter: *Pajarillo, Pajarillo verde* and *Zumba que zumba*. Musicians and singers usually perform different melodic variations on these subgenres; I included sample melodies on all three. Other variations on *Zumba que zumba* are included in a transcription featured in Appendix A.
Criteria for Composing Contrafacts

I used two main approaches for writing the contrafact melodies included in this chapter.

“Classical-Folklore” Crossover Style

Melodies such as *Una de aquí, Barbarita* and *Los jobos de El Guapo*, exhibit an active character based on eighth-note subdivisions. They feature arpeggios, scales, syncopation and other elements reminiscent of the virtuosic style of groups such as *El Cuarteto, Gurrufío* and similar ensembles that have proliferated in Venezuela for the past three decades. This style could be described as a classical-folklore crossover, where soloists are often classically trained woodwind or brass instrumentalists. *Cuatro* or guitar performers well versed on Venezuelan genres usually provide the accompaniment, as well as occasional melodic participation. An upright bass is usually part of these ensembles, as well as optional percussion.

Vocal Style

Melodies such as *El afilador de cuchillos, Epílogo* and most of the contrafact *gaitas* were composed with a vocal approach in mind. I wanted them to be easy to sing, thus they are less active rhythmically, less syncopated, and they use more stepwise movement and chord tones than the ones described in the previous paragraph. These contrafacts are presented in simple rhythms so that performers can develop their own interpretations.
Example 13. *Cumbe*

**Gaita**

**Cumbe**

\[ \text{Chorus} \]

\[ \text{Em} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{D}^7 \quad \text{Cm}^7 \quad \text{F}^7 \]

\[ \text{Dm}^7 \quad \text{Db}^7 \quad \text{Cm}^7 \quad \text{Gm} \quad \text{D}^7 \quad \text{Gm} \quad \text{Soloist} \]

\[ \text{FINE} \]

\[ \text{Cm} \quad \text{D}^7(b9) \quad \text{Gm} \quad \text{Gm} \quad \text{Eb} \quad \text{Eb} \]

\[ \text{D}^7 \quad \text{Gm} \quad \text{Cm} \quad \text{D}^7(b9) \quad \text{Gm} \]

\[ \text{Chorus} \]

\[ \text{Gm/F} \quad \text{Eb} \quad \text{A}^7 \quad \text{D}^7(b9) \quad \text{D}^7 \]
Example 14. Guillermo en Panaquire
Example 15. Guillermo en Panaquire page 2
Example 16. El Bardo de la Madrugada

EL BARDO DE LA MADRUGADA

PABLO GIL
Example 17. Desconocido

Desconocido

GUITA

Tempo: 113

Em   Em/D#   Em/D   Cm7   Am   B7   Em

D7   G   D7   G

Fém7(b5)   B7   Em   Am   B7   Em

Am   Em   Fém7(b5)   B7   Bm7   E7

Am   D7   G   C   Fém7(b5)   B7   Em

Am   D7   G   Am   D7   G   Cm7(b5)

Fém7(b5)   B7   Em   Fém7(b5)   B7   Em

Am   Em   Fém7(b5)   B7   Bm7   E7

Am   D7   G   C   Fém7(b5)   B7   Em
Example 18. Barbarita

\[ \text{BARBARITA} \]

\( \text{TONOPO} \)

\( j = 250 \)

\( \text{PASLO GIL} \)

\( \text{Ab/C} \quad \text{Eb7/Ab} \quad \text{Ab} \)

\( \text{F7/Eb} \quad \text{Bbm/Db} \quad \text{F7/C} \quad \text{Bbm} \)

\( \text{C7/Db} \quad \text{Fm/Db} \quad \text{C7/G} \quad \text{Fm} \)

\( \text{Bb7/Ab} \quad \text{Eb/G} \quad \text{Bb7/F} \quad \text{Eb} \)

\( \text{Db} \quad \text{Ab/C} \quad \text{Eb} \quad \text{Abmaj7} \)

\( \text{Ab} \quad \text{Ab} \quad \text{Eb7} \quad \text{Ab} \quad \text{Ab} \quad \text{Ab} \quad \text{Ab} \)

\( \text{Ab} \quad \text{Ab} \quad \text{Eb} \quad \text{Eb} \quad \text{Eb} \quad \text{Eb} \quad \text{Eb} \)

\( \text{Db} \quad \text{Eb} \quad \text{Eb} \quad \text{Eb} \quad \text{Eb} \quad \text{Eb} \quad \text{Eb} \)

\( \text{Eb} \quad \text{Eb7} \quad \text{Eb7} \quad \text{Ab} \quad \text{Ab} \quad \text{Ab} \quad \text{Ab} \)
Example 19. *El Diablo Suelto*

\[ \text{JOEPO} \]

**DIABLO SUELTO**

**HERAQUIO FERNANDEZ**

\[ J = 250 \]

\[ \text{C/E} \]

\[ \text{Dm} \]

\[ \text{G7} \]

\[ \text{Em7(9)} \]

\[ \text{Am} \]

\[ \text{F} \]

\[ \text{C/G} \]

\[ \text{A7} \]

\[ \text{Bb} \]

\[ \text{C} \]

\[ \text{F/C} \]

\[ \text{Dm} \]

\[ \text{Gm} \]

\[ \text{C7} \]

\[ \text{F} \]
Example 20. *Pajarillo*
Example 21. *Pajarillo Verde*

**Pajarillo Verde**

Joe Pepo

\[ \text{Transcription Pablo Gil} \]

\[ \text{Folklore} \]
Example 22. Zumba que Zumba, chord progression with sample melody

ZUMBA QUE ZUMBA

Am  E7  Am  Am  A7  A7  Dm
Dm  Dm  E  Dm  Am/C  E/B  Am

SAMPLE MELODY
Am  E7  Am
Am  A7  A7  Dm
Dm  Dm  E
Dm  Am/C  E/B  Am
Example 23. El Afilador de Cuchillos

MENENQUE

EL AFIADOR DE CUCHILLOS

PABLO GIL

A7

G7

C7

Fm7

Em7

A7

Dm117

G7

Cm7

F7

Em7

Gm/A

Gadd6

Gadd6

E13(b9)

Em7

E7

A

D

Cm

Gm7

G

A

G

A

Em7(b5)

A7

Dm

Dm7(b5)

G7(b9)

Cm17

Fm17

Bm7(b5)

E7

Am

Em7(b5)

E7

C

G7

E7

Am
Example 24. Una de Aquí
Example 25. Epílogo

Merengue

Medium-up

EPÍLOGO

Pablo Gil

Cm Eb Ab Fm D7

G7 G7 Cm Cm/Ab

Am7 Bb D7 Dm7 Bb G7

Cmaj7 E7 Am C7 F A7

Dm Dm7 Dm7 Fmaj7 Fm6 Em

[1]

A7 D7 Dm7 G7

[2]

A7 Dm7 G7 Cm Fm7 G7 Cm Fm7 G7

[3]

A7 Dm7 G7 Cm
Example 26. Los Jobos del Guapo

LOS JOBOS DEL GUAPO

MERENQUE

\[ \text{Db} \]

\[ \text{Gb} \]

\[ \text{Db} \]

\[ \text{Eb7} \]

\[ \text{Gb} \]

\[ \text{Db} \]

\[ \text{Ab7} \]

\[ \text{Db} \]

\[ \text{Gb} \]

\[ \text{Db} \]

\[ \text{Gb} \]

\[ \text{Db/F} \]

\[ \text{Ab7/Eb} \]

\[ \text{C#m} \]

\[ \text{F#m} \]

\[ \text{E} \]

\[ \text{G#7} \]

\[ \text{C#m} \]

\[ \text{F#m} \]

\[ \text{E} \]

\[ \text{G#7} \]

\[ \text{C#m} \]

\[ \text{F#m} \]

\[ \text{C#m} \]

\[ \text{G#7} \]

\[ \text{C#m} \]
CHAPTER SIX

PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

All of the Venezuelan genres chosen for this essay present important rhythmic and stylistic challenges to musicians who are not familiar with them. Since this essay caters essentially to performers who share at least some jazz background but presumably little knowledge of Venezuelan music, this chapter offers important information on key rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic aspects of selected genres. It also provides specific ideas on how to perform these genres on three selected jazz rhythm section instruments: piano, bass and drums.

The information on how to perform selected Venezuelan genres provided in this chapter is grouped by genre. This information includes comping patterns for piano, bass and drums within each genre. The vast majority of these comping patterns come from transcriptions of selected recordings. I have also included drum set patterns that come from suggestions made by performers of traditional Venezuelan music, who have generously shared part of their musical experience for this research.

Notes on the Role of Rhythm Section Instruments in Selected Genres

The piano, acoustic bass and drum set were not part of the original instrumentation of any of the selected genres. They have been gradually introduced to the ensembles that perform these genres with varying degrees of success. Musicians that perform on these instruments have adapted patterns and performance practice elements from other instruments, and they have also created new approaches.
The Piano

Among the three rhythm section instruments featured in these guidelines, providing effective performance practice information for the piano presents the greatest challenge. This is due partly to the fact that the piano is foreign to the original traditions of the *gaitas, joropos and merengues*. However, the main reason is that comping patterns for the piano within these genres often sound constricted and busy, are difficult to perform, and limit the possibilities of jazz pianists to accompany in a relaxed manner. Even though I have included in this chapter some comping patterns for the piano, in all three genres I recommend a jazz comping approach. In this approach pianists would be basing their comping on the harmonic structure of the compositions, but they would be free to devise their rhythmic activity and voicings by reacting to the groove established by the bass and drums.

The Bass

Compared to the piano, the role of the bass is very clear in each of the selected genres, and the comping patterns provided in this chapter are effective and relatively easy to play. These comping patterns are taken from transcriptions of bass lines in recordings of selected compositions. I did not include the bass lines in all of my transcriptions, but I provide at least two transcribed bass lines for each selected genre. These bass lines can be found in the full transcriptions included in Appendix A.

*Instruments that Historically Performed Bass Lines in Selected Genres*

Within traditional *gaita* ensembles the low frequencies were provided by the already described *furruco*.71 In *joropo* ensembles, there are records of a *marimbula* being

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used as a bass instrument, but the low strings of the *arpa llanera* usually perform that role.\(^{72}\) Information on early *merengue* practice is unclear on the subject, but the bass is included in the instrumentation mentioned by most scholars.\(^{73}\)

**The Drums**

The drum set did not originally perform the role of percussive rhythmic accompaniment in any of the three selected genres. As discussed in Chapter Four, percussion was provided by *tamboras, furrucos* and *charrascas* in *gaita* ensembles. In *joropo* ensembles the main percussion instruments were the *maracas*; in *merengue* ensembles, the *charrasca* and the snare drum. Venezuelan drummers have devised ways to imitate the rhythmic foundation provided by these other percussion instruments. The drum set patterns provided in this section are adaptations of what those other instruments usually play, and they come from transcriptions of recordings and from the advice of expert Venezuelan drummers.

*Drum Set Notation*

The drum set notation legend in example 27 describes the notation of the basic elements of the drum set used in this guide. Most of the patterns that feature a closed hi-hat can also be performed on the ride cymbal in solos, chorus sections or to add variety.

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\(^{72}\) The *marimbula* is a three to five note plucked box musical instrument. Emilio Mendoza, “La Marímbola: ¿Tiene Lenguas o Tiene Dedos?,” *El Diario de Caracas*, August 20, 1999.

Example 27. Drum Notation Legend

Performance Guidelines by Genre

_Gaita_

As stated in Chapter Four, compositions within this genre come in many varieties since each _gaita_ has its own form, harmony and melody. However, there are common elements in the accompaniment used on rhythm section instruments within this genre.

_Gaita Comping Patterns for the Piano_

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, originally there was no piano in _gaita_ ensembles, and the harmonic accompaniment role was performed by the _cuatro_. However, this genre has had an evolution that has brought it close to other Afrocaribbean genres, and the piano is now an important instrument in contemporary _gaitas_. My examination of piano accompaniment in _gaitas_ has led me to determine that it often consists of patterns called _montunos_ or _tumbaos_. There are a wide variety of _montuno_ patterns in _gaitas_, and they often use similar voice-leading techniques and rhythmic activation patterns as those found in salsa _montunos_. A thorough study of these patterns is beyond the scope of this essay, but commercially issued publications provide many

montuno patterns within the rich and varied context of Latin jazz and salsa piano performance.⁷⁵

Some gaita montuno patterns use 6/8 eighth notes as the basis for their rhythmic structure, while others use binary sixteenth-note based patterns. Example 28 shows a piano montuno based on 6/8 eighth notes.

Example 28. *Gaita 6/8 Eighth-Note Piano Montuno*, on a G major chord

A similar pattern based on binary sixteenth notes is shown in Example 29. *Gaita Binary Sixteenth-Note Piano Montuno*, on a G major chord It creates rhythmic tension between the sixteenth notes and the underlying 6/8 meter, and it is often used on choruses.

Example 29. *Gaita Binary Sixteenth-Note Piano Montuno*, on a G major chord

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The comping approach described earlier in this chapter would be more effective within a jazz context. It can be provided by playing the chord changes without stressing all the subdivisions, contrary to what happens in *montuno* patterns.

*Gaita Comping Patterns for the Bass*

The *gaita* bass comping patterns provided in this section come from the analysis of bass lines I transcribed in selected recordings of *Pregones Zulianos* and *Sentir Zuliano*. These are two of the four selected compositions that represent the genre in this essay. The bass line in *Sentir Zuliano* was performed on the already mentioned “baby bass,” an electric upright bass, and the performance is often chaotic in intonation, dubious in note choice, and it also lacks rhythmic precision. However, the patterns used in this recording match those found in the bass line transcription of *Pregones Zulianos*.

As in other genres, the choice of patterns to be used depends on which section of the song is being performed. The accompaniment varies on verses and choruses.

*Basic Gaita Quarter-Note Pattern.* When chords last a measure or longer, the basic bass pattern for verses is a three-quarter-note figure as shown in Example 30. It creates a syncopated feel and rhythmic tension in relation to the natural accents on beats one and four of the 6/8 measures.

Example 30. Basic *Gaita* Quarter-Note Bass Pattern, *Sentir Zuliano*, m. 15
A variation on this pattern, substituting the root on beat three for a fifth in the lower register (as in example 31), can be found in both of the bass line transcriptions already mentioned.

Example 31. *Gaita* Quarter-Note Bass Pattern Variation, with low fifth on beat five, *Sentir Zuliano*, m.9, C major chord

![Example 31](image1)

Another variation observed in *gaita* bass line transcriptions is the use of an arpeggio of ascending root, third and fifth.

Example 32. Variation on Three Quarter-Note Pattern, *Pregones Zulianos*, m. 27

![Example 32](image2)

In order to provide a smooth bass line, passing tones can be used on the third quarter note of this rhythmic pattern. This can be done either as a quarter note, such as in example 33, or as two eighth notes as in example 34.

Example 33. Quarter-Note Passing Tone on beat five, mm. 5-6, *Pregones Zulianos*

![Example 33](image3)
Example 34. Eighth-Note Passing Tones, beats 5 and 6 of mm. 22, Sentir Zuliano

\[ \text{Example 34. Eighth-Note Passing Tones, beats 5 and 6 of mm. 22, Sentir Zuliano} \]

\[ \text{Dotted quarter note patterns. Example 34 shows the use of dotted quarters when} \]

harmonic rhythm is two chords per bar or when cliché lines are used within the duration

of a longer chord.

Example 35. Dotted Quarter Note Pattern, Pregones Zulianos

\[ \text{Example 35. Dotted Quarter Note Pattern, Pregones Zulianos} \]

\[ \text{Chorus section pattern. During choruses a more active and accented pattern is usually} \]

preferred. It can also be found during middle verses to add rhythmic variety. This manner

of performing the bass in chorus sections is based on the rhythmic pattern shown in

example 36.

Example 36. Chorus Section Gaita Bass Line, Pregones Zulianos, mm 6-8

\[ \text{Example 36. Chorus Section Gaita Bass Line, Pregones Zulianos, mm 6-8} \]

\[ \text{Rhythmic activity and passing tones can be added on beat six of this pattern, as} \]

shown in example 37. This procedure is similar to the one observed in example 34.
Example 37. Chorus Section *Gaita* Bass Line, eighth note on beat six, *Sentir Zuliano* mm. 31-34

![Gaita Bass Line](image)

*End-of-Section Arpeggios.* Arpeggios are used to mark the end of a section or the resolution to the tonic. They are performed in different contours, but they are always presented rhythmically as three eighth notes and a dotted quarter.

Example 38. End of Section Arpeggio

![Em Arpeggio](image)

*Gaita Comping Patterns for the Drum Set*

*Basic pattern.* The main percussion instruments used in this genre are the *tamboras.* The patterns provided here are adaptations of *tambora* patterns to the drum set. As in other rhythm section instruments, different patterns can be used for verses and choruses, or to introduce a different rhythmic approach. The pattern featured in example 39 can be used for verses.
Example 39. Basic Drum Set *Gaita* Comping Pattern

The bass drum notes on beats two and five of the first measure in example 39 imitate the sound of the stick hitting the middle of the skin of the *tambora*. The hi-hat and rimshot snare notes imitate the sound of the stick hitting the wooden part of the *tambora*. *Chorus section pattern*. The pattern featured in example 40 is a variation that can be used in the chorus or in a middle section. Accents on beats one and four provide a stronger stress on downbeats, absent in the previous example. These rhythmic accents help solidify the groove when the piano patterns superimpose a binary, sixteenth-note-based *montuno* as shown in Example 27.

Example 40. Drum Set *Gaita* Chorus Pattern, with accents

*Repiques*. *Repiques* or fills, such as the one shown in example 41, are common either as a setup to begin a song or to mark the beginning of a new section. They are usually based on 6/8 eighth notes and their subdivisions. These fills are generally performed on the wood or on the rim of the *tambora*. The same procedure can be followed on the drum set by performing the fill on the rim of the snare.
Example 41. *Repique*, performed on the rim of the *tambora*

\[ \text{Joropo} \]

*Joropo Comping Patterns for the Piano*

*Joropo* comping patterns used on the piano are usually derived from the performance practice of the *arpa llanera*. Available piano transcriptions of *joropos* do not include comping patterns, and they are harmonically sparse. Those featured in Mrs. Claudia Calderón’s website\(^76\) consist only of the melodic line in the right hand, while the left hand imitates the bass lines performed by the *arpa llanera*. An examination of selected *joropos* recorded by Venezuelan pianists shows that although they use some harp-inspired *joropo* patterns in introductions and vamps, their comping in solo sections and under melodies often corresponds to the jazz comping model described earlier in this chapter.\(^77\) Example 42 provides a transcription of the piano pattern performed by Otmaro Ruiz in the introduction to *Suelto y disfrazao*, a very fast *joropo* based on *El diablo suelto*.\(^78\) It is clearly inspired by harp accompaniment figures, and it is very active rhythmically, filling almost all available eighth notes.


\(^{78}\) Otmaro Ruiz, *Distant Friends*. 
A pattern such as the one presented in example 42 is very effective in creating an authentic joropo rhythmic feel, but it limits the ability of a jazz pianist to improvise a richer harmonic background and a simpler, more relaxed rhythmic comping.

**Joropo Comping Patterns for the Bass**

Different comping patterns can be used on the bass in joropos, depending on which kind of golpe is being played.

**Golpe corrío (3/4) pattern.** If the composition being performed is a golpe corrío (in 3/4), the main pattern to be used consists of quarter notes on beats one and three as shown in mm. 2-8 of example 43. The main rhythmic variation to this pattern consists of occasionally performing the three quarter notes of a 3/4 measure, as in measure 9 (Am) of the same example.
**Golpe de seis pattern** (6/8). On the other hand, when accompanying a composition in a **golpe de seis** (in 6/8) such as the *Pajarillo*, the bass often stresses beats three and five of the 6/8 bar, as shown in example 44.

Example 44. Bass Accompaniment, *Pajarillo*, mm. 12-15

![Example of Bass Accompaniment, Pajarillo, mm. 12-15](image)

In some cases the pattern includes an ascending line in quarter notes from I- to V7, but the rhythmic stress is still on beats three and five.

Example 45. Bass Accompaniment, *Pajarillo*, mm. 4-7. Ascending line on A minor chord

![Example of Bass Accompaniment, Pajarillo, mm. 4-7](image)

Another common device used by bass players and harmonic instrumentalists is the superimposition of 2/4 bars upon the 6/8 meter. Example 46 illustrates this procedure. In this case the movement from I- to V is achieved by the use of an andalusian cadence (I minor, bVII, bVI, V), performed in half notes and starting on the third eighth note of the first measure.

Example 46. Hemiola on Bass and Harmonic Rhythm, “andalusian cadence”

![Example of Hemiola on Bass and Harmonic Rhythm, “andalusian cadence”](image)
Joropo Comping Patterns for the Drum Set

As previously mentioned, the main percussion instruments in joropo ensembles are the maracas. The groundbreaking work by Venezuelan drummer Frank “El Pavo” Hernández with Aldemaro Romero’s group in the early ‘70s is an essential reference for drummers that wish to accompany the joropo. It is often said Mr. Hernández was the first musician to adapt this genre to the drum set.79

Golpe corrío pattern. Example 47 shows the main pattern for 3/4, or golpe corrío, forms.

Example 47. Golpe corrío (3/4) Joropo Drum Set Pattern

Golpe de seis pattern. Example 48 shows the main pattern for 6/8, or golpe de seis, forms.

Example 48. Golpe de seis (6/8) Joropo Drum Set Pattern

Some forms, such as the Pajarillo con chipola already described in Chapter Four, combine sections in 3/4 meter and sections in 6/8 meter. In those cases a transition and extra beats have to be added to the pattern. A 1/4 or a 2/4 bar has to be added to accomplish the transition. Its function is to allow the music to go from one time signature

to the next without interrupting the bass pattern. Since both the bass and maracas continue their patterns, the movement of the dancers is not disrupted.

Transition from golpe corrión to golpe de seis. Example 49 shows the transition from golpe corrión to golpe de seis applied to the drum set, creating a 4/4 bar from the sum of the last bar of 3/4 and the added quarter note.

Example 49. Transition from 3/4 to 6/8, drum set pattern

This transition can also be notated with an added 1/4 bar as in example 50.

Example 50. Transition from 3/4 to 6/8, added 1/4 measure, drum set pattern

Transition from Golpe de seis to Golpe corrión. When the transition occurs from 6/8 to 3/4, a 2/4 bar is added as shown in example 51.

Example 51. Transition from 6/8 to 3/4
Merengue

Merengue Comping Patterns for the Piano

Comping for the *merengue* on the piano presents an important rhythmic challenge and a conceptual choice. An examination of available recordings of Venezuelan jazz pianists performing this genre reveals different approaches to the *merengue*. The pianist can choose to “lock in” the groove with a five-note pattern, such as the one shown in example 52, recorded in 2006 by Austrian-born Venezuelan jazz pianist Gerhard Weilheim on *Trompo, Metra y Papagallo*.80

Example 52. *Merengue* Piano Comping Pattern, Gerhard Weilheim, *Trompo Metra y Papagallo*

![Merengue Piano Comping Pattern](image)

Another choice for the pianist would be to play in an open, jazz-influenced style. An ensemble that features a bass player and a drummer that perform the patterns provided in this chapter will establish the basic groove, and it seems unnecessary for the piano to insist on the 5/8 subdivision already stated clearly by the rest of the rhythm section.

Venezuelan jazz pianist Silvano Monasterios’ performance in Ávila, shows how he alternates between five-note textures (such as arpeggios, ostinatos and bass lines) and

80. Weilheim, Gil and Quintero, *Empatía*. 
a less active chordal approach, similar to that used to accompany other jazz styles. He plays many different rhythms in his performance, but some of them are recurring and can be used as default comping rhythms. The first pattern I identified consists of playing chords, or different voicings of the same chord, on beats one and four of a 5/8 measure as in example 53.

Example 53. One-Bar *Merengue* Piano Rhythmic Pattern

Mr. Monasterios frequently introduces another comping pattern that consists of playing a chord on beat one and melodic notes on beat five, leading into the next chord as in example 54.

Example 54. *Merengue* Piano Comping Pattern, melodic leading note on beat five

---

Example 55 illustrates another rhythmic approach to performing chords that last only one bar. In this case the chord in the first measure is played on the first eighth note, and the next chord appears in the second eighth note of the second measure.

Example 55. Two-Bar Merengue Piano Comping Pattern

When Mr. Monasterios is comping on chords that last at least two bars, he often uses the rhythmic approach shown in example 56. It consists of playing the chord change in the first bar, and a melody with the rhythmic figure shown in the second bar. These melodic elements lead into the next measure. His use of this device can be heard during parts of the melody and during the saxophone solo in a recording of a merengue by Gabriel Vivas titled Elsewhere.82

Example 56. Two-Bar Merengue Comping Pattern, second bar features rhythm for melodies leading into next measure

---

Merengue Comping Patterns for the Bass

The most basic form of accompaniment for merengues in the bass is a three-note pattern. In 5/8 meter it can be described as two quarter notes and an eighth note, as shown in example 57, mm. 1-2 of the transcription of un heladero con clase.

Example 57. Basic Merengue Bass Comping Pattern

A common two-bar rhythmic pattern is shown in example 58. In this pattern the second measure is similar to the second measure of the pattern in example 56.

Example 58. Two-Bar Merengue Bass Comping Pattern

Another common variation is shown in example 59. It is similar to the rhythmic approach presented in the piano pattern shown in example 54. It is effective for stepwise motion in the bass.
Example 59. *Merengue* Bass Comping Pattern, alternating half notes and eighth notes

As in the patterns shown in *gaita* examples 36 and 37, a more syncopated version is often used during choruses or for more dynamic sections. In these patterns each chord is anticipated on beat five of the previous bar.

Example 60. Syncopated *Merengue* Bass Comping Pattern

*Merengue Comping Patterns for the Drum Set*

All the patterns provided here are one-bar repeating patterns. The one shown in example 61 is the most basic form.

Example 61. *Merengue* Drum Set Pattern

The bass drum note on beat two is optional, it can be omitted in faster tempos. The hi-hat figures in this pattern, as well as in those shown in examples 62 and 63, can be played on the ride cymbal for a more “open” sound.
On moderate tempi, variations on the hi-hat pattern shown in example 61 can be used to add variety, as in examples 62 and 63.

Example 62. *Merengue* Drum Set Pattern, hi-hat variation n.1

Example 63. *Merengue* Drum Set Pattern, hi-hat variation n.2

The next pattern, shown in example 64 is derived from the traditional snare drum accompaniment. It produces a tight, syncopated feel, and it is effective to accompany choruses or syncopated melodies. The note on beat one is often played on the left drumstick. The foot hi-hat notes are optional; they can be added in slow and moderate tempi and omitted in faster ones.

Example 64. Syncopated *Merengue* Drum Set Comping Pattern
Conclusions

This research has been predominantly directed at identifying important Venezuelan genres and repertoire. Once these were identified, the process of gathering information on the repertoire and performance guidelines was based primarily on the transcription and analysis of selected repertoire. After encountering difficulties with using copyright protected material, I engaged in a creative process by which contrafact melodies were composed on the harmonic changes of selected compositions, based not only on the progressions but also on the stylistic elements observed in the transcription process. This essay provides enough information to instruct jazz performers, both professionals and students, in how to perform selected Venezuelan genres, and at the same time it provides a viable repertoire.
APPENDIX A

TRANSCRIPTIONS OF SELECTED REPERTOIRE.

Appendix A.1: Acidito
Appendix A.2: Apure en Un Viaje
Appendix A.3: Aquel Zuliano
Appendix A.4: Criollisima
Appendix A.5: La Grey Zuliana
Appendix A.6: Pajarillo
Appendix A.7: Pajarillo Verde
Appendix A.8: Pregones Zulianos
Appendix A.9: Presagio
Appendix A.10: Sentir Zuliano
Appendix A.11: Un Heladero con Clase
Appendix A.12: Zumba que zumba
Appendix A.1.: Acidito

ACIDITO

MERENGUE

ADELYS FREITES
TRANSFIGURATION PABLO GAS

INSTRUMENTAL  Fm  Cm  Gb7  Cm

Db  Ab  Gb  Db  Ebm  Db

Ab  Db  Ab7  Ebm  Fm  Gb  Db

Ab7  Db  Db  Gb  Db

Ab  Db  Gb  Db/F  Ab7/Eb

Cm  Fm  E  Gb7

Cm  Fm  E  Gb7  Cm  Fm

E  Gb7  Cm  Fm  Cm  Gb7  Cm

O.C.

INSTRUMENTAL
Appendix A.2.: Apure en Un Viaje

**APURE EN UN VIAJE**

*GENARO PRIETO*

*TRANSCRIPTION PABLO QIL*

**JOROPA**

$\text{ difficility = 250}$

\[ \begin{array}{ccccccc}
\text{Eb} & \text{Ab/C} & \text{Eb7/Db} & \text{Ab} & \text{F7/Eb} \\
\text{Bbm/Db} & \text{F7/C} & \text{Bb} & \text{C7/Db} & \text{Fm/Ab} & \text{C7/G} \\
\text{Fm} & \text{Bb/Ab} & \text{Eb/G} & \text{Bb/F} & \text{Eb} & \text{Db} \\
\text{Ab/C} & \text{Eb7/Db} & \text{Ab} & \text{F7/Eb} & \text{Ab} & \text{Fm/Ab} \\
\text{Ab} & \text{Eb} & \text{Ab} & \text{Ab} & \text{Db} & \text{Eb7} \\
\end{array} \]

100
Appendix A.3.: Aquel Zuliano

AQUEL ZULIANO

SENATO AQUIRRE
TRANSCEPTION PABLO GIL

\[ \text{\textcopyright 1981} \]

\[ \text{\textcopyright 1985} \]
Appendix A.4.: Criollisima

CRIOLLISIMA

Luis Laguna
Transcription Pablo Gil

MÉNENQUE

Tempo = 145

Gm  Gm/Bb  Cm7  D7  Gm  Gm/Bb  Am7(b5)  D7

FM  G7  Cm7  F7  Gbmaj7  A7  D7

A7  D7(sus4)  D7  G  Am7  Bm7

Em  Cmaj7  Bm7  Dm7  G7  C7(b5)  Cmaj7

Bm7  Em7  Am7  D7  G  Am7  Bm7

Em  Cmaj7  Bm7  Dm7  G7  Cmaj7  Fmaj7

Bm7  Em  Am  D7(sus4)  C7  F7  Gbmaj7  Ebmaj7  Am7(b5)  D7

Dm7  G7  Cm7  F7  Gbmaj7  Ebmaj7  Am7(b5)  D7

G  F  G  F  G  F

Notation and transcription details for the musical piece "Criollisima" are presented, including chord symbols and musical notation.
Appendix A.5.: La Grey Zuliana
Appendix A.6.: *Pajarillo*
Appendix A.6.: *Pajarillo*, continued
Appendix A.6.: Pajarillo, continued
Appendix A.6.: Pajarillo, continued
Appendix A.7.: Pajarillo verde

**PAJARILLO VERDE**

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*José de Arrieta*
Appendix A.7.: *Pajarillo verde*, continued

\[\text{Music notation image}\]

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Appendix A.7.: Pregones Zulianos

PREGONES ZULIANOS

RAFAEL RINCON GONZALEZ
TRANSCRIPTION PABLO GIL
Appendix A.7.: Pregones Zulianos, continued
Appendix A.8.: Presagio

**Presagio**

Merengue

ENRIQUE HIDALGO

Cm  Eb  Ab  Fm  D7

7  C7  C7  Cm  (Cm7/Bb)

(Am7/Bb) 1  (Dm7/Gb) 2

13  D7  D7  C7  Dm7  C7

19  Cmaj7  E7  Am  C7  F  A7

25  Dm  F  Fm  Em  A

(Dm7) 1  2

31  Dm7  C7  C  F  G7  Cm

36  Fm  G7  Cm  Fm  G7  Cm

113
Appendix A.9.: Sentir Zuliano

**Sentir Zuliano**

Norberto Prela & Jose Rodriguez

Transcription Pablo Gil

**GAITA**

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Appendix A.9.: *Sentir Zuliano*, continued.
Appendix A.10.: Un Heladero con Clase

UN HELADERO CON CLASE

MELENQUE

LUIS LAGUNA

TRANSCRIPTION PAUL GIL

\( \text{\textcopyright 2017} \text{ Paul Gil} \)
Appendix A.10.: *Un Heladero con Clase*, continued
Appendix A.11.: Zumba Que Zumba, melodic variations
Appendix B

EXPERT PANEL DOCUMENTS


Appendix B.2: English Translation of Appendix B.1.

Appendix B.3: List of Experts Contacted.
Estimados amigos y colegas:

Dentro del marco de estudios que curso actualmente, quiero hacer un trabajo de investigación sobre la música venezolana popular y folclórica.

La primera parte de esta investigación requiere de la colaboración de un panel de expertos que postulen canciones o temas instrumentales venezolanos que deberían figurar en una antología. Por el bien de la investigación, la selección debe provenir de un campo amplio de expertos y no de parte del investigador. La selección será siempre subjetiva, pero mientras más gente informada participe en el proceso la escogencia tendrá mayor validez.

He pensado en cada uno de Uds. como experto sobre la música venezolana y quiero pedirles su colaboración. Consiste en su poner su nombre en el espacio en blanco y postular un mínimo de 20 y un máximo de 100 canciones/temas instrumentales, dependiendo de su tiempo y disposición. Pueden ser las más conocidas y famosas de los compositores más importantes u otras de su consideración, pero para la selección final se tomará en cuenta, entre otros criterios, la cantidad de grabaciones que haya tenido cada tema. Como se que todos estamos muy ocupados, sólo les pido los nombres de los temas. En casos de temas muy oscuros o poco conocidos, me ayudaría tener la información del compositor o intérprete.

La idea es que los temas pertenezcan a algún género típicamente venezolano: 

*merengue, gaitas, valses, joropos*, onda nueva, etc., etc.

Les agradezco de antemano inmensamente su colaboración.
Appendix B.2.: English Translation of Appendix B.1.

Dear friends and colleagues:

Within the framework of studies I am currently pursuing, I wish to focus my research on popular Venezuelan folk music.

The first part of this research requires the collaboration of a panel of experts who will select the Venezuelan songs or instrumental compositions that should be included in an anthology. For the sake of this research, the selection must come from a field of experts and not from the researcher himself. A selection process is always subjective, but the more informed people are involved the greater validity it will gain.

I consider each of you to be an expert on Venezuelan music and I ask for your help. It consists in putting your name in the blank space and supplying a minimum of twenty and a maximum of one hundred songs or instrumental compositions, depending on your time and availability. These compositions may be the best known, or other that you consider important. As I know we are all very busy, I just ask the names of the compositions. In cases of compositions with unfamiliar composers, please provide the information on the composer or performer.

The idea is that the selected compositions should belong to a genre typically Venezuelan: *merengues, gaitas, waltzes, joropos*, etc.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration.
Appendix B.3.: List of Experts Contacted Through Email

The following experts were contacted through mail requesting their participation in the expert panel in the repertoire selection process:

Performers (Vocalists, Instrumentalists, Conductors)

Composers and Arrangers
Music Critics, Writers, Radio Hosts

Alejandro Calzadilla, Leonardo Bigott, César Miguel Rondón, Federico Pacanins, Xariell Sarabia, Roberto Palmitiesta, Juan Carlos Ballesta, Félix Allueva, Gregorio Montiel Cupello, Julio César Venegas, Lil Rodríguez, Moraima Blanco.

Other (sound engineers, music teachers, music scholars, producers)

Zuly Perdomo, Rafael Rondón, María Eugenia Atilano, José Bracho, Germán Landaeta.

Experts who answered request and provided a list of selected compositions:

Maria Eugenia Atilano, José Bracho, Prisca Dávila, María Eugenia Méndez, Gregorio Montiel, César Orozco, Federico Pacanins, Roberto Todd and Saúl Vera.
APPENDIX C

TABLES WITH INFORMATION ON REPERTOIRE SELECTED BY EXPERT PANEL

Appendix C.1.: Table 2. All Compositions Selected by Expert Panel

Appendix C.2.: Table 3. Transcribed Compositions
Appendix C.1.
Table 2. All Compositions Selected by Expert Panel

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In Table 2., columns 2-10 represent selections by each panel member. The abbreviations are initials of panel members as follows:

CO: César Orozco; FP: Federico Pacanins; MA: María Eugenia Atilano; MM: María Eugenia Méndez; GM: Gregorio Montiel Cupello; RT: Roberto Todd; SV: Saúl Vera; PD: Prisca Davila.
Appendix C.2.: Table 3. Transcribed Compositions

Table 3. Transcribed Compositions

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