A PERFORMANCE GUIDE AND ANALYSIS OF CARLOS ESCALANTE MACAYA'S DESASOSIEGO FOR SOLO BASSOON, STRINGS, AND PERCUSSION (2017)

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ABSTRACT

This research project aims to promote one of the few solo works written for bassoon and orchestra by a Costa Rican composer. Carlos Escalante Macaya (b. 1968) wrote *Desasosiego* in 2017 for Fernando Zúñiga Chanto and the University of Costa Rica Symphony Orchestra. Zúñiga Chanto has performed the work several times with different orchestras in Costa Rica, but it has not yet premiered internationally. This monograph offers a detailed analysis of the work and a performance guide with the objective of motivating bassoonists from around the world to learn and program the work. The analysis studies the work's musical form, harmonic structure, melodic and rhythmic development, and programmatic qualities. This is the first-ever analysis of this important composition.

Carlos Escalante Macaya is one of the most prolific living composers in Costa Rica, especially in music for film, theater, and dance, but with important works in the symphonic, choral, chamber, and solo genres as well. He studied in Costa Rica, Spain, and South Africa, and this monograph explores his compositional career and the most important works that shaped his musical language and imagination, such as his *Sinfonía Centenario* (1997). Escalante Macaya won Costa Rica's highest music honor in 2022: the *Premio Nacional de Música* "Carlos Enrique Vargas" (National Music Award). He is also a long-time composition professor at the University of Costa Rica and a history professor at the National Music Institute of Costa Rica, where he was my teacher during my undergraduate studies. Understanding his background and musical career offers valuable information about the ideas and musical language behind his work *Desasosiego*.

The analysis of Escalante Macaya's work is based on materials provided by the composer for this project, including a virtual interview (January 2025), scores, images, and language describing programmatic elements used in *Desasosiego*. Other additional materials are Zúñiga Chanto's three different recordings of the work, another monograph written at Temple University by Dr. Ana Catalina Ramírez Castrillo on Escalante Macaya's Latin-Grammy nominated Clarinet Concerto, and the book *Música académica costarricense: Del presente al pasado cercano* (2012). The latter is the only book with information about Carlos Escalante Macaya and includes a biography, catalog of works, and analysis of his musical language. As a Costa Rican bassoonist, I wrote this extended analysis from both a theoretical and practical standpoint, offering a performance guide to help future bassoonists looking to learn and perform the work.

As an introduction and complementary research, this monograph reviews the brief history of the bassoon as a solo instrument in Costa Rica and the potential reasons for that brevity. I examine these reasons with help from leading Costa Rican bassoonists, offering possible strategies to promote the academic use of the bassoon as a solo instrument in the country. Costa Rica has a rich history of renowned bassoonists and orchestral composers, but only a few original works for solo bassoon and orchestra. Ideally, this research seeks to not only promote Escalante Macaya's *Desasosiego* but also advocate for more frequent use of the bassoon in the Costa Rican compositional scene, with new collaborations between performers and Costa Rican composers to expand the existing solo repertoire for solo bassoon and large ensemble.

In memory of my favorite person in the world, my abuelita Elga Villalta López

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THE BASSOON AS A SOLO INSTRUMENT IN COSTA RICA

Costa Rican Institutions Dedicated to Art Music

Costa Rica experienced its most significant musical reforms during the second half of the 20th century. The main musical organizations dedicated to art music emerged in the 1940s and underwent a transformative musical revolution in the 1970s as described below. These institutions played a crucial role in establishing the profession of classical musicians and are now vital in producing art music in Costa Rica and the surrounding region. The most influential among them are the *Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Costa Rica* (National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica), the *Instituto Nacional de Música* (National Music Institute), the *Escuela de Artes Musicales* (School of Musical Arts), and the *Ministerio de Cultura y Juventud* (Ministry of Culture and Youth).

The National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica gave its first concert on October 30, 1940, as *Orquesta Nacional* (National Orchestra). In collaboration with the *Asociación de Cultura Musical* (Musical Culture Association), Uruguayan conductor Hugo Mariani and Costa Rican violinist Alfredo Serrano led the ensemble's genesis. The inaugural concert featured works by Ludwig van Beethoven, Felix Mendelssohn, Maurice Ravel, and Costa Rican composer Julio Fonseca. The orchestra adopted its current name in 1942 and received government funding the following year. (Vargas Cullell 2023)

In 1971, the orchestra was reorganized with the support of Costa Rican President José Figueres Ferrer and Deputy Minister of Culture Guido Saénz. The first part of this musical revolution involved firing many of the orchestra’s players and hiring foreign

musicians, who moved to Costa Rica to raise the level of the orchestra and train the next generation of national instrumentalists. The American conductor Gerald Brown was named the orchestra's new music director, who diversified the repertoire and grew audiences. (Vicente León 2013, 171-177)

The second part of the revolution occurred in 1972, when the orchestra founded the *Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil* (Youth Symphony Orchestra) and *the Programa Juvenil* (Youth Program). The government invested in hundreds of instruments and enlisted foreign musicians as mentors for these programs, through which children from the metropolitan area began their classical music training. They performed in the Youth Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Gerald Brown, with their inaugural concert on November 3, 1973, featuring works by Robert Schumann, Ludwig van Beethoven, Kent Kennan, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Costa Rican composer Manuel María Gutiérrez. (Vicente León 2013, 182-191) These programs have successfully contributed to cultivating the next generation of classical musicians and adding members to the National Symphony Orchestra. In 1996, the Youth Program was renamed *Instituto Nacional de Música* (National Music Institute) in partnership with the public university *Universidad Estatal a Distancia* (Distance State University) to offer undergraduate music performance degrees. (Vargas Cullell 2012, 38)

The other prominent institution dedicated to educating young musicians was the *Conservatorio Nacional de Música* (National Music Conservatory), founded in 1941 by pianist Guillermo Aguilar Machado and supported by Public Education Secretary Luis Demetrio Tinoco. After its governmental budget was approved, the conservatory began operations in March 1942 and was annexed to the *Universidad de Costa Rica* (University

of Costa Rica) in 1994. The conservatory founded its orchestra with a group of teachers and students, giving its inaugural concert on September 14, 1956, as *Orquesta de Cámara* (Chamber Orchestra), and is now called *Orquesta Sinfónica de la Universidad de Costa Rica* (University of Costa Rica Symphony Orchestra). (Vicente León 2013, 41-61)The 1970s also brought three important musical reforms to the conservatory: in 1971 it started offering college degrees in music performance, music education, composition, orchestral conducting, and music sciences; three years later, it was renamed *Escuela de Artes Musicales*; and in 1978 it founded its *Etapa Básica* (Preparatory Division) to offer music education to children and teenagers. (Vargas Cullell 2012, 22)

All these reforms were possible thanks to the enormous cultural efforts led by President José Figueres Ferrer, and were greatly advanced through the Ministry of Culture and Youth, which opened on January 1, 1971, under the direction of its first Minister, Alberto Cañas. This institution has been responsible for the artistic development of the country and overseeing many cultural institutions that are now part of the country's identity. Two phrases from this period have become emblematic of this musical reformation: Cañas said "*Hay que poner a los poetas a escribir poesía y al pueblo a leerla*" in 1971 and Figueres said "*¿Para qué tractores sin violines?*" in 1972. These translate to "We must get poets to write poetry and the people to read it" and "Why tractors without violins?". These historical phrases exhibit the commitment of the state to implement a transformative cultural indoctrination and give the arts a significant role in the Costa Rican public agenda. (Vargas Cullell 2012, 35-36)

These institutions established the profession of classical musicians in Costa Rica. They continue to be the principal institutions dedicated to producing art music today, by educating and hiring musicians who can dedicate their lives to it. It took several decades for them to institute their organizational structure and finances to operate as they now do in the 21st century. For the purposes of this research, these institutions have resulted in two critical consequences: the inception of an important generation of Costa Rican bassoonists and a large group of Costa Rican composers dedicated to writing modern classical music. Therefore, the last thirty years have seen the birth of the first Costa Rican compositions featuring the bassoon. From 1995 to 2025, at least thirty works were written by sixteen composers, together comprising the Costa Rican repertoire for bassoon.

There are seven documented works in the concerto genre: six for bassoon and orchestra, and one for bassoon and symphonic band. Five of these works were premiered by Costa Rica bassoonists, as shown in Table 1. These compositions have enhanced the bassoon's role in the Costa Rican music community, demonstrating the instrument's virtuosic and lyrical capabilities. They are also a result of the advanced development in the Costa Rican bassoon school that has been heavily influenced by the numerous Costa Rican bassoonists who studied with prominent bassoonists in Europe and the United States.

Table 1. *Costa Rican Works for Solo Bassoon and Large Ensemble*

Title	Composer	Year	Premiere
Concerto for Bassoon and Small Orchestra, Op. 205 *Sobre un canto indígena bribri de Costa Rica*	Mario Alfagüell	2008	Unknown
Semblanza for Bassoon and String Orchestra	Benjamín Gutiérrez	2009	Leyla Zamora, soloist Norman Gamboa, conductor Washburn University Symphony Orchestra (KS) November 4, 2009
Canto a Whitman for Bassoon and Symphonic Band	Marvin Camacho	2011	Cindy Bolandi, soloist Pamela Bowen Bustos, conductor University of Wisconsin-Superior Symphonic Band (WI) December 8, 2011
Episodios for Bassoon and Orchestra	Vinicio Meza	2016	Carlos Ocampo, soloist Alejandro Gutiérrez, conductor National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica April 1, 2016
Desasosiego for Solo Bassoon, Strings, and Percussion	Carlos Escalante	2017	Fernando Zúñiga Chanto, soloist Alejandro Gutiérrez, conductor University of Costa Rica Symphony Orchestra July 3, 2018
Triple Concerto for Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, and String Orchestra	Sergio Delgado	2018	PEN Trio Nora Lewis, oboe Phillip Paglialonga, Clarinet Eric Varner, bassoon Darwin Aquino, conductor ASM Festival Orchestra (Panama) June 10, 2018
Concerto *Mamba-Mambo* for Bassoon and Strings	Fernando Zúñiga Chanto	2024	Fernando Zúñiga Chanto, soloist University of Costa Rica Strings October 9, 2024

The work by Mario Alfagüell (b. 1948) is only mentioned once, in the book *Música académica costarricense: Del presente al pasado cercano*, as part of his catalog

of works. (Vicente León 2012, 293) Nevertheless, there is no more information about this concerto and it is unknown if it has been premiered yet.

The work by Benjamín Gutiérrez (b. 1937) was originally written for oboe under the title *Bosquejos* (1981), and later adapted for bassoon as a dedicatory to María Eugenia Sequeira (1953-2009). She was a Costa Rican bassoonist and former Principal Bassoon with the *Orquesta Sinfónica del Gran Teatro del Liceo* in Barcelona, Spain, but unfortunately passed away before premiering the work. Another Costa Rican bassoonist premiered the work, Leyla Zamora (b. 1966), the contrabassoonist with the San Diego Symphony. (Tenorio 2009) Gutiérrez is considered the most important composer in Costa Rica's musical history. He studied at the New England Conservatory, the University of Michigan, and the *Torcuato di Tella* Institute; worked for many years as a teacher at the School of Musical Arts; and collaborated with the National Symphony Orchestra multiple times as a conductor and composer. ("Biography Benjamín Gutiérrez" 2025)

The work by Marvin Camacho (b. 1966) is the first one ever written for solo bassoon and symphonic band in the history of Latin America and is based on texts by the American poet Walt Whitman. It was premiered by Cindy Bolandi (b. 1979), the Principal Bassoon with the *Banda Nacional de San José* (National Band of San José). (Muñoz Solano 2011) Camacho studied at the School of Musical Arts with Benjamín Gutiérrez and Mario Alfagüell and now works as a music professor at the University of Costa Rica. ("Biografía Marvin Camacho" 2025)

The work by Vinicio Meza (b. 1968) was originally written for solo tuba with trombone quartet accompaniment, and later adapted for bassoon and orchestra as a dedicatory to Carlos Ocampo (1973-2018). He was a Costa Rican bassoonist and a

renowned former Principal Bassoon of the National Symphony Orchestra for twenty-five years. Meza is one of the most performed Costa Rican composers in history. He studied at the Curtis Institute of Music and Florida State University and now works as the bass clarinetist with the National Symphony Orchestra. Meza won the *Premio Nacional de Música* "Carlos Enrique Vargas" (National Music Award) for this composition, which is Costa Rica's highest musical honor and is given by the Ministry of Culture and Youth. (Chinchilla Bravo 2017)

Sergio Delgado's (b. 1993) work was dedicated to the American chamber ensemble, the PEN Trio, in the context of the Alfredo De Saint Malo Music Festival in Panama City. The bassoonist was Eric Varner (1974-2019). This is the only Costa Rican work that features the bassoon in a group of soloists. Delgado is the most performed young Costa Rican composer, and his works are heard worldwide. He studied composition with Benjamín Gutiérrez and clarinet at the School of Musical Arts; and now works as a performer and teacher in the University of Costa Rica Symphony Orchestra and Ministry of Culture and Youth. ("Delgado: Impromptus a Revueltas" 2025)

The work by Fernando Zúñiga Chanto (b. 1977) was written for himself and inspired by the African snake mamba and the Cuban dance mambo. He studied at Baylor University and the University of Arizona and now works as the bassoon professor at the School of Musical Arts. ("Fernando Zúñiga Chanto" 2025) Also a composer, he has written numerous works in the last five years and recently won the National Music Prize in Composition "Carlos Enrique Vargas" for his bassoon concerto. (Phillips Alvarez 2025)

Despite the scarcity of concertos written for the bassoon, two of them have won the National Music Prize, which speaks to the important role of the bassoon in Costa Rican art music of the 21st century. There are multiple other Costa Rican works with the bassoon in the spotlight, including works for bassoon quartet, unaccompanied bassoon, bassoon and piano, and others, as shown in Table 2. The bassoon quartets by Vinicio Meza are the most performed Costa Rican works featuring the bassoon.

Table 2. *Other Costa Rican Works Featuring the Bassoon*

Title	Composer	Year	Instrumentation
Bassoon Quartets			
Imágenes	Vinicio Meza	1996	4 Bassoons
Bagatelas	Eddie Mora	1998	4 Bassoons
Revenir	Benjamín Gutiérrez	1998	4 Bassoons
Cha-cha-chá	Vinicio Meza	2001	4 Bassoons
Retrato III	Eddie Mora	2005	4 Bassoons, Harpsichord
Quisiera decirte	Vinicio Meza	2007	4 Bassoons
BaRocko	Vincio Meza	2017	4 Bassoons
Fagoteros	Vincio Meza	2017	4 Bassoons
Unaccompanied Bassoon			
Eter	Lucio Barquero	2017	Bassoon
El Rey Roble	Gabriel Morera	2017	Bassoon
Sombra y Luz	Sandra Duarte	2017	Bassoon
Burlesque	Sergio Delgado	2017	Bassoon
Soliloquio	Daniel Garrigues	2017	Bassoon
Homenaje a Ciudades Invisibles	Otto Castro	2017	Bassoon
Raindrops after the Storm	Fernando Zúñiga Chanto	2022	Bassoon

Table 2. (continued)

Title	Composer	Year	Instrumentation
Los Duendes	Fernando Zúñiga Chanto	2022	Electric Bassoon
Others			
Preludio y Danza de la Pena Negra	Benjamín Gutiérrez	1995	Bassoon, Piano
Preludio y Fuga	Eddie Mora	1997	Bassoon, Piano
Motivos	Vinicio Meza	1999	2 Bassoons, Marimba
De amores y desamores	Marvin Camacho	2014	2 Bassoons, Piano
El Coco	Fernando Zúñiga Chanto	2022	Bassoon, Piano
?	Mario Alfagüell	2022	Bassoon, Piano
Latin Spirits	Manuel Matarrita	2024	Bassoon, Piano
Tres Invenciones Sabatinas	Sergio Delgado	2025	2 Bassoons

The predominance of bassoon quartets is mainly a product of the work of the *Cuarteto Phoenix* (Phoenix Quartet). Founded in 1993, this ensemble was led by Costa Rican bassoonist Isabel Jeremías (b. 1954) for two decades. They commissioned several of the quartets in Table 2 and recorded three albums of Latin American music. Jeremías was the bassoon professor at the School of Musical Arts, who was joined in the quartet by several of her former students, including her successor, Zúñiga Chanto. Two other ensembles have influenced the creation of Costa Rican music for bassoon quartet: the National Music Institute's Bassoon Quartet, led by the former institute's professor Marco Redondo Mesén (b. 1968); and the *Fagotes Locos* (Crazy Bassoons), a quartet from the Radio Symphony Orchestra of Vienna where Costa Rican bassoonist Marcelo Padilla (b. 1980) is the Principal Bassoon.

Another relevant project is the release of the album *Historias* (Stories), recorded by Fernando Zúñiga Chanto at the University of Costa Rica in 2018. He did exhaustive research to find unaccompanied bassoon works but ultimately found none. Therefore, he commissioned these works from six different Costa Rican composers, including professors, students, and alumni of the School of Musical Arts. This compendium represents the first six compositions for unaccompanied bassoon ever written in Costa Rica. (Córdoba 2017)

Lack of Costa Rican Music for Solo Bassoon

Unfortunately, only a few works feature the bassoon within Costa Rica's art music scene. The second half of the 20th century saw the establishment of the classical musician as a profession in the country, with numerous composers creating Costa Rican art music of excellent quality. Nevertheless, the bassoon only entered the compositional scene at the turn of the 21st century, primarily propelled by a new generation of Costa Rican bassoonists who raised the standards of bassoon playing in the country, often after studying abroad, and decided to collaborate with living composers. For example, Zúñiga Chanto is responsible for a third of the previously mentioned works, both as a composer and performer.

As part of this dissertation, a survey (Appendix 2) was sent to eight leading Costa Rican bassoonists who work worldwide, many of whom are already mentioned in this chapter. Five of them completed the survey and offered valuable information on two subjects: their current knowledge of the existing repertoire for solo bassoon and large ensemble, and their opinion on why this kind of repertoire is lacking.

Their first answers show that none of them knew about the concerto by Alfagüell. Most of them knew about the other six works, but only a tiny minority had performed any of the works. These performances mostly include the world premieres listed in Table 1, with no other performances since then. Additionally, they didn't know of any other work outside the ones listed in this dissertation and the survey.

They were next asked the following: *What reasons do you attribute to the lack of Costa Rican repertoire for solo bassoon?* Their answers included the following reasons:

- Disinterest amongCosta Rican bassoonists to perform and commission works for solo bassoon
- Disinterest among Costa Rican cultural institutions to program music for solo bassoon
- Disinterest among Costa Rican composers to write works for solo bassoon
- Lack of symphony orchestras in Costa Rica
- Lack of budget to commission new works

They were next asked the question: *What changes could promote the commission and programming of Costa Rican repertoire for solo bassoon?* Their answers disclosed the following solutions:

- Initiative from Costa Rican bassoonists to commission and program works
- Initiative from Costa Rican cultural institutions to finance commissions
- Programming the existing Costa Rican repertoire for solo bassoon
- Inclusion of Costa Rican works in the bassoon teaching curriculum
- Finding private funding to finance commissions

These solutions would require a collective effort in which bassoonists, composers, art administrators, conductors, teachers, and orchestras collaborate to promote and broaden the Costa Rican repertoire for solo bassoon. There are already many bassoonists working towards this cause and this dissertation seeks to motivate more to join the collective effort. Costa Rica produces many composers who write high-quality art music and bassoonists who play at a very high level, which is expected to continue the 21st-century trend of growing the repertoire that features this instrument that was neglected in the previous century. Additionally, it is essential to educate the next generations of bassoonists to learn the current repertoire and to understand the importance of collaborating with composers. Costa Rican bassoonists and musicians need to envision a future in which Costa Rican composers are celebrated by creating new compositions featuring the bassoon and frequently programming them in concerts within and outside the country.

CHAPTER 2

CARLOS ESCALANTE MACAYA'S COMPOSITIONAL CAREER

His Early Years and Education

Carlos Escalante Macaya was born in Barcelona, Spain, on October 30, 1968. His parents were Costa Rican, and he legally obtained their nationality early on. His first musical experience occurred during childhood when he discovered a piano at his grandmother's house. He took private lessons from various teachers but never studied seriously. In high school, he and his friends became fans of heavy metal and sometimes gathered to play music by Motorhead and AC/DC. He also performed with several rock bands in his twenties, including *Armagedón*, *Avenida Nadie*, *Igni Ferroque*, and Mata Fonseca's band. (Escalante Macaya 2025)

Escalante Macaya earned his bachelor's degree from the School of Musical Arts at the University of Costa Rica in 1995 and 1997, as the undergraduate program in the country consists of two levels and graduation ceremonies. He studied composition under three prominent 20th-century Costa Rican composers: Luis Diego Herra, Benjamín Gutiérrez, and Bernal Flores. He furthered his education by attending composition seminars with the Italian composer Franco Donatoni in Mexico in 1996 and studying music technology with the Spanish composer Adolfo Núñez in Madrid in 1999. (Escalante Macaya 2025)

In 2000, he relocated to Cape Town, South Africa, to study under Peter Klatzow and Hendrik Hofmeyr. His studies involved compositional research in neighboring countries and writing music for local ensembles and choirs. He earned his graduate

degree at the South African College of Music, University of Cape Town, in 2002. This period was highly influential for Escalante Macaya, as he reflected: “Peter Klatzow… (was) an amazing composer. His music has always seemed to me extremely original and honest.” (Escalante Macaya 2025)

His Professional Life

Carlos Escalante Macaya's professional career demonstrates exceptional versatility. He has composed over one hundred works across various genres, including orchestral, chamber, choral, piano, dance, theater, and film. Additionally, he collaborates with numerous cultural institutions: teaching music history at the National Music Institute, instructing composition at the University of Costa Rica, composing and directing for both the *Compañía Nacional de Danza* (National Dance Company) and the *Compañía Nacional de Teatro* (National Theater Company), and frequently composing for the National Symphony Orchestra and the University of Costa Rica Symphony Orchestra. (Chatski 2012, 324) His extensive musical catalog has been recorded in multiple audio formats and has earned him several prestigious accolades, as listed below:

- Second Place, Permanent Central American Competition “September 15” (Guatemala, 1992)
- First Place, Latin American Composition Competition, National Theater Centenary (Costa Rica, 1997)
- ACAM Composer of the Year, Incidental Music (Costa Rica, 2000)
- ACAM Composer of the Year, Incidental Music (Costa Rica, 2004)
- ACAM Composer of the Year, Incidental Music (Costa Rica, 2010)
- Best Soundtrack, National Film Festival (Costa Rica, 2010)

- Peter Klatzow Composition Prize (South Africa, 2001)
- National Music Award “Carlos Enrique Vargas” (Costa Rica, 2022)

His musical language reflects the current trend in the Costa Rican compositional scene, where composers create art music with an interdisciplinary approach. Their music incorporates elements from various periods, regions, artistic disciplines, musical genres, and cultures. This fusion of musical traditions fosters a free compositional style that is characteristic among Costa Rican composers, enabling each of them to forge authentic identities in their works. This identity emerges from their life experiences and creative interests, encompassing the places they have inhabited, the mentors who have taught them, the jobs they held, and the art they engaged with. (Vargas Cullell 2012, 46)

Escalante Macaya’s music showcases a distinctive identity that blends various recurring compositional techniques with three extramusical elements. Costa Rican musicologist Ekaterina Chatski highlights some of these characteristics in her book, *Música Académica Costarricense: Del presente al pasado cercano*, primarily focusing on the work *Sinfonía Centenario* (1997). This symphony, which consists of four movements, marked Escalante Macaya's first competition victory and serves as early evidence of the mature musical identity that has shaped his compositional career. The techniques identified by Chatski include:

- *Perpetuum mobile*: a rapid and consistent flow of notes of equal speed
- Minimalism: the repetition of small and similar patterns
- Choral texture: four-part counterpoint of related musical lines
- African rhythms: the use of polyrhythms, particularly the 2:3 hemiola
- Ostinato bass: recurring harmonic and rhythmic lines in the lower voices

These compositional techniques are essential to Escalante Macaya's musical language. They are clearly connected to the meaning of his music, which often displays a programmatic quality due to the aforementioned three extramusical elements that inspire his compositions. Chatski discusses how these elements come from three artistic disciplines beyond music.

The *Perpetuum mobile* is a fundamental characteristic of the first extramusical element: dance. Escalante Macaya's music frequently employs this device through rapid series of notes with syncopated accents that define the motion of his compositions. Other compositional resources with dancing qualities include minimalism, ostinatos, and African rhythms. Combined with his frequent use of percussion instruments, these elements forge a stable rhythmic groove. (Chatski 2012, 250) This primary use of repetition is closely tied to choreographic movements and stems from the composer's extensive collaboration with the National Dance Company, as well as his research on Afro-Latino, Afro-Caribbean, and South African rhythms.

The second extramusical element is theater, showcased through alternating contrasting materials related to sound, character, and tempo. Escalante Macaya's music is emotionally dramatic, thanks to the drastic variations in speed and instrumental colors that arise from his extensive work with the National Theater Company. (Chatski 2012, 250)

The third extramusical element is literature, which often inspires the composer through the works of various authors and poets. This influence is evident in his extensive catalog of compositions for dance, theater, and film, and it also plays a significant role in much of his concert music. These literary inspirations are frequently reflected in the titles

of his pieces and movements, employing non-musical terms that convey a specific narrative behind his music. (Chatski 2012, 250)

Desasosiego for Solo Bassoon, Strings, and Percussion

Carlos Escalante Macaya composed his piece *Desasosiego* in 2017 at the request of Fernando Zúñiga Chanto, who asked him to write a work for solo bassoon and small orchestra. The eleven-minute world premiere occurred on July 3, 2018, at the *Teatro Popular Melico Salazar,* featuring the University of Costa Rica Symphony Orchestra and Costa Rican conductor Alejandro Gutiérrez. Throughout the entire composition process, Escalante Macaya and Zúñiga Chanto collaborated closely. Escalante Macaya remarked, "Any concerto for solo instrument that is not comfortable and idiomatic for the instrument will certainly be doomed to fall into oblivion with time." (Escalante Macaya 2025)

The main title, *Desasosiego,* is a Spanish word that translates most accurately to "Disquietude" in English. The *Real Academia Española* (Royal Spanish Academy) defines *desasosiego* as "the absence of stillness, tranquility, and serenity." ("desasosiego" 2025) The Oxford English Dictionary defines disquietude as "a disquiet condition or state, restlessness, disturbance, unrest." ("disquietude" 2023) This clarifies the meaning behind the music as described by Escalante Macaya: "*Desasosiego* is a musical paraphrase of the feeling of despair that comes from enduring a long-term depression." (Escalante Macaya 2025)

The orchestral score's cover page includes a photograph by American artist Roger Ballen (b. 1950), whose work is associated with depression, hopelessness, and despair by Escalante Macaya, shown in Figure 1. (Escalante Macaya 2025) This is another example

of his interdisciplinary approach to composition, with another art field that informs his musical narrative. Ballen has spent five decades living in South Africa, where Escalante Macaya's affinity for his work started. Ballen's work is famous for its black-and-white and disquieting physiological portraits of complex narratives. He often uses a combination of meda, including drawing, sculpture, painting, collage, film, theatre, and installation. ("Robert Koch Gallery" 2025) Escalante Macaya found inspiration in *Squawk* (2005), which is part of Ballen's publication titled *Boarding House* (2009). Ballen describes Boarding House in this quote: "It is difficult to explain this place except that I think it exists in some way or another in most people's mind." ("Roger Ballen" 2025)

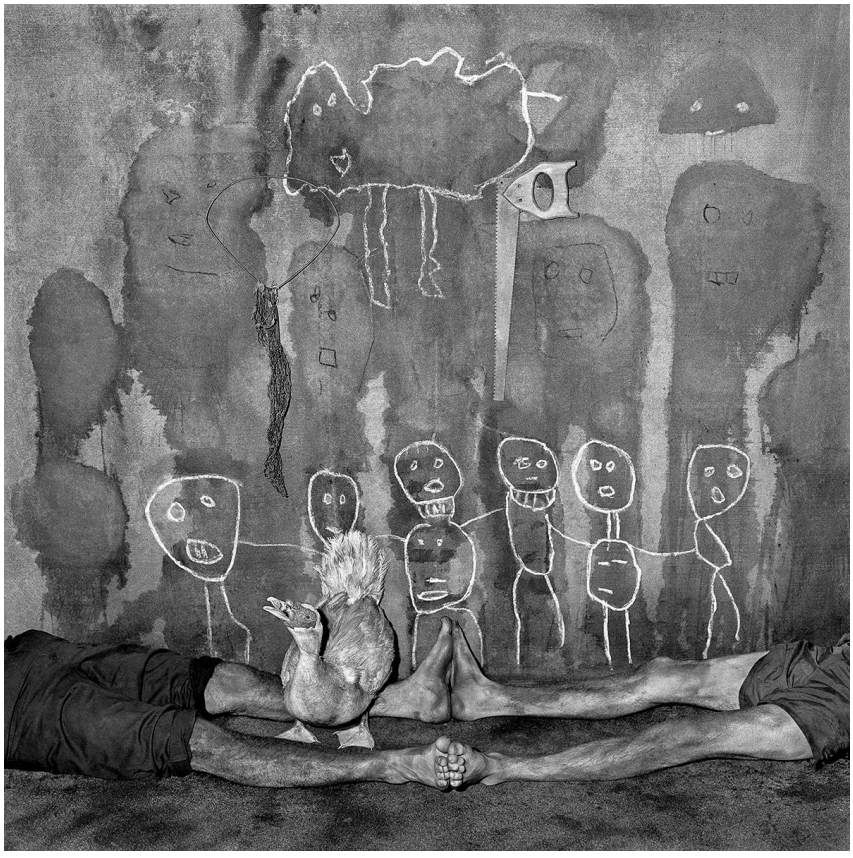


Figure 1. Squawk by Roger Ballen

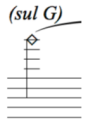
The narrative in *Desasosiego* is both dramatic and emotional, reflecting the composer's distinctive style. He views the work as more representative of a rhapsody than a concerto. The term "rhapsody" comes from the Greek word *rhapsōdos,* which means "a reciter of poetry." A rhapsody is a musical composition that allows for flexibility in texture and structure, often presented in an episodic and poetic manner and featuring contrasting and passionate gestures with an improvisational quality. (Rink 2001) This grants the composer substantial freedom to arrange their ideas without structural constraints, creating a unique narrative that shapes the musical form rather than being defined by it.

The work is divided into three parts, each featuring numbers and titles in different languages. The first part is titled *"Muerte de Clitemenestra*," the second "*Green woorde*," and the third "*abazi lutho*." Despite the composer's remarks regarding its rhapsodic nature, the influence of the concerto genre is apparent. The work exhibits the two fundamental characteristics of a concerto: it features a soloist with ensemble accompaniment and is organized into three self-contained entitites. Therefore, *Desasosiego* may be more accurately described as a rhapsody in the style of a concerto, and for this analysis, the three parts will be referred to as movements.

The piece features a solo bassoon accompanied by first violins, second violins, violas, cellos, basses, and two percussionists. The first percussionist plays six instruments: finger cymbals, taiko drum, tambourine, suspended cymbal, bass drum, and marimba. The second percussionist plays four instruments: three gongs of high, medium, and low pitches, along with timpani. Additionally, Escalante Macaya employs extended techniques for a variety of instruments, which he outlines in a glossary, translated in the

table below. The upcoming chapters will focus on a thorough analysis of each movement in the compositions.

Table 3. *Glossary of Extended Techniques*

Symbol	Explanation
	Natural harmonic (strings). The parenthesis indicates the string that must be played, and the diamond indicates the place where it needs to be pressed.
	Crescendo dal niente, crescendo from nothing.
	Decrescendo dal niente, decrescendo to nothing.
	Glissando.
	Portamento, bending. Start the note half a step lower and do a glissando until reaching the written pitch.
Sul pont.	Sul ponticello. Rough and metallic sound, very close to the bridge.
Verso il pont.	Rough and metallic sound, close to the bridge but no “sul ponticello.”
nat.	Natural, ordinary sound.
	Rim (percussion). Struck in the wooden edge.

CHAPTER 3

DESASOSIEGO'S MOVEMENT 1, "MUERTE DE CLITEMENESTRA"

The Title and Its Meaning

The first movement is titled *Muerte de Clitemenestra* in Spanish, which translates to "Clytemnestra's Death." The music for this movement is based on sketches composed by Escalante Macaya for a scene in the tragic Greek trilogy *Oresteia,* written by Aeschylus. This scene, part of the second play of the trilogy titled *The Libation Bearers*, depicts Clytemnestra's son Orestes murdering her as an act of vengeance for the murder of his father Agamemnon, King of Mycenae. Orestes was ordered by the god Apollo, assisted by his sister Electra, and encouraged by his cousin Pylades to commit matricide. In the first play of the trilogy, titled "Agamemnon," Clytemnestra kills Agamemnon with her lover Aegisthus as another act of revenge, for the murder of their daughter Iphigenia, whom Agamemnon sacrificed as an offering to the gods for success in the Trojan War. ("Clytemnestra" 2021)

Etymology of Clytemnestra

The word Clytemnestra comes from ancient Greek and has different meanings depending on spelling variations among various authors. Aeschylus employed an etymology that combines two Greek words: klutós, which means "celebrated," and mḗdomai, which means "to plan." (van Raalte 2023) Therefore, Clytemnestra often translates to "famous plotter." This deliberately connects the name to the character, as

Clytemnestra spent years plotting her husband's murder, making her and her lover Thyestes the renowned Queen and new King of Mycenae for seven years.

Similar to Clytemnestra's plot, Orestes spent time considering and planning his mother's murder. The tale of secretly plotting to commit an immoral act is closely linked to the music composed for *Desasosiego,* setting the tone for the first movement. The tragic narrative conveys suspense and distress as central elements in Aeschylus' complex trilogy, which Escalante Macaya translates into the music of *Muerte de Clitemenestra*. He employs various harmonic and melodic devices to begin his *Desasosiego,* illustrating the parallels between the dark emotions of Greek tragedy and the previously-discussed depressive feelings found in Roger Ballen's work.

Harmonic Analysis

The first movement adopts a minimalistic approach to harmony, as noted in the table below. This table highlights an intriguing and recurring use of the E#/F dissonance, both as regular dissonances and as the highly dissonant interval of major sevenths (M7).

Table 4. *Harmonic Development of Movement 1*

Measure	Chord	Dissonances
B minor		
1 - 14	B minor	C#, **F (E#)**, G
15 - 19	F# chord (no third)	D, **F (E#)**, B
20 - 29	F# chord (no third)	D, **F (E#)**, G
30 - 31	B chord (no third)	G, A
32 - 33	F# minor	G, B
34 - 35	B minor	C#, G
36 - 39	F# Major m7 (non-resolving leading tone)	D, G

Table 4. (continued)

Measure	Chord	Dissonances
40 - 46	F# chord (no third)	D, **F (E#)**
47 - 48	B chord (no third)	**E#**, G
49 - 50	F# chord m7 (no third)	G
51 - 52	B minor (no fifth)	G, A#
53 - 54	F# Major **M7** (non-resolving leading tone)	G
55 - 56	B chord (no third)	**E#**, G
57 - 58	F# chord m7 (no third)	G
59 - 60	B minor	G, A #
61	F# Major (non-resolving leading tone)	D, **F (E#)**, G, B
62-65	B minor	C#, **E#**, A#
66 - 67	F# only	**E#**
68	F# chord (no third)	D, B
69 - 72	B minor	C#, **E#**, G
73 - 74	F# chord **M7** (no third)	D
75	B chord (no third)	**E#**
75 - 77	F# diminished **M7**	None
78	General Pause (G.P.)	None

The theme of despair that characterizes this work is quickly highlighted by the harmonic choices in the first movement. This movement employs only two chords in the key of B minor: a tonic and a dominant chord. Most of these chords lack a third, significantly diminishing the harmonic relationship between them and creating a sense of disconnection. The steady, slow *adagio* tempo in 2/4 meter, combined with the absence of thirds, enhances the atmosphere of stillness. There are only three instances where a major

third (A#) appears during a dominant chord, but these A#s are brief and treated as passing notes.

These weak dominant chords occur in bars 36, 53-54, and 61, sounding almost as thirdless as the other chords in the movement and not fulfilling their traditional function. In the first two, the solo bassoon line is the only instrument playing the A#, and it occurs twice; however, these instances are either grace notes or thirty-second notes, serving a more ornamental role rather than a harmonic one (Illustration 1). The third instance features an A# in the first percussion line, and even though it goes to a B, it quickly transitions to an F natural within the F# dominant chord, again functioning as a passing note and ornament (Illustration 2). These unresolved A#s consistently appear throughout the movement, often alongside B tonic chords, contributing to the unsettled harmonic texture.

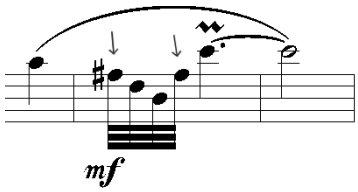


Illustration 1. First Non-functional A# (Solo Bassoon, Measure 36)

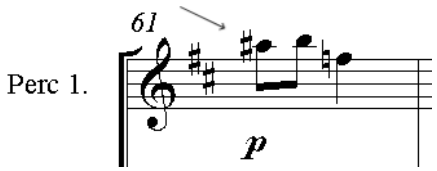


Illustration 2. Third Non-functional A# (Percussion 1, Measure 61)

The movement features various dissonances that create a persistently obscure atmosphere. These dissonances emerge from numerous non-chord tones, primarily

focusing on three recurring suspensions or retardations: D-C#, G-F#, and F#-E#. They are classified as suspensions or retardations based on the motion of the two notes: suspensions resolve downwards, while retardations resolve upwards. The composer also frequently uses the note E#/F as a source of dissonance, generating two of the most dissonant intervals against the two main chords: functioning as a tritone to B and as a major seventh to F#. This further contributes to the unsettled harmonic texture, as it never fulfills its roles of leading tone or seventh, similar to the previously mentioned A#.

The harmony of this movement is somber from beginning to end. It is clearly in B minor, but the traditional harmonic functions are abandoned in order to create a texture of constant tension that never resolves. The ending features the first traditionally structured chord, an F# diminished seventh chord (Illustration 3), with its tonic, third, fifth, and seventh sounding simultaneously. Nevertheless, this is one of the most dissonant chords in the movement since it contains the major seventh and a tritone between the tonic and fifth. This general harmonic instability significantly contributes to the sense of unease that defines this composition and characterizes the emotions surrounding the conflict between Clytemnestra and her son Orestes.

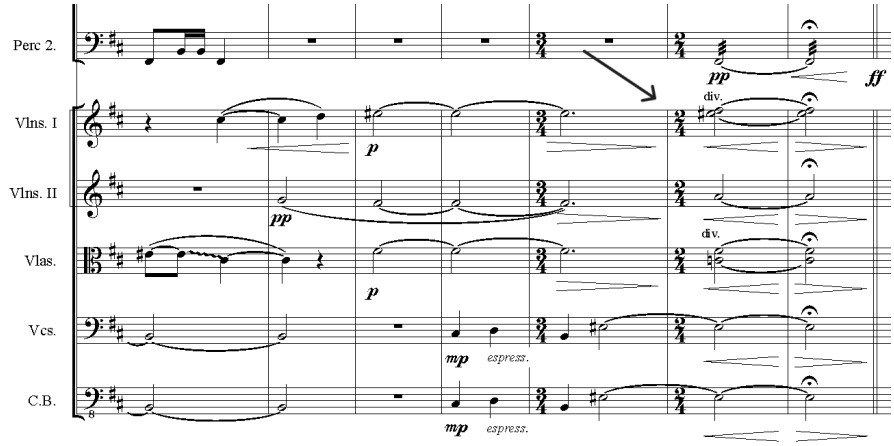


Illustration 3. Final Chord in Movement 1 (Measures 76-77)

Structural Analysis

None of the movements in *Desasosiego* adheres to a traditional musical form. The composer envisioned the work as a rhapsody, resulting in an irregular and episodic structure. The first movement can be divided into two main sections, each further broken down into episodes, as shown in the table below.

Table 5. *Form Structure of Movement 1*

Measures	Episodes	Large Sections	Tonal Center
1 - 16	Introduction	Section A	B minor
17 - 39	First solo statement		
40 - 51	Introduction	Second B	
52 - 67	Second solo statement		
68 - 78	Conclusion		

Since the movement lacks harmonic variety and a defined progression, its structure must be interpreted through instrumentation, orchestral texture, and the relationship between the solo line and accompaniment. The first sixteen measures serve as an introduction, featuring only the orchestra and employing a thin texture that lacks low notes. The strings sustain long notes while a distant sense of pulse begins in the percussion with a syncopated ostinato in the *crótalos* (finger cymbals) and later in the strings with D-C# suspensions. The solo bassoon enters in measure 17 and continues through measure 37, accompanied by a clear ostinato bass line alternating between B and F#. An orchestral fermata in measure 39 on a unison F# with a diminuendo represents a clear section ending for this first solo statement episode and the first section.

The second section begins at measure 40, featuring another introduction reminiscent of the first episode. Once again, the strings initiate with a delicate texture of sustained notes, followed by a delayed entrance of the lower notes. The composer repeats the syncopated ostinato in the percussion and introduces even more suspensions in the strings: D-C#, G-F#, and F#-E#. The second solo statement starts at measure 52 when the solo bassoon reenters with a slightly shorter solo line that continues until measure 65. This second solo statement concludes with an orchestral fermata at measure 67, but this time, there is a pronounced dissonance between E# and F# and a crescendo in the timpani that signals the approach of the end of the movement. The closing section begins at measure 68 without the soloist, concluding similarly to the previous episode, where a dissonant chord is suddenly silenced, generating anticipation for the next movement.

Influence of Minimalism

This movement exhibits many qualities that can be regarded as minimalistic. Minimalism is a concept that originated in the visual arts and was later adopted in the musical arts as a compositional style in the latter half of the 20th century, emerging as a reaction to the complexities of modernism. (Potter 2014) It aims to use limited resources to establish an identity rooted in simplicity. The key characteristics of minimalistic music are:

- Monotonous rhythmic patterns
- Repetition of small melodic fragments
- Constant pitch drones
- Tonal/modal harmony

The first two have been discussed previously. Escalante Macaya utilizes only two chords and an ostinato bass line alternating between the same two pitches throughout the movement, creating continuous pitch drones (Illustration 4). The harmony is tonal, centering around B minor, and although it lacks the conventional functions of chord progressions, the same two pitches act as the primary harmonic groundings. From a harmonic standpoint, this first movement is minimalistic.

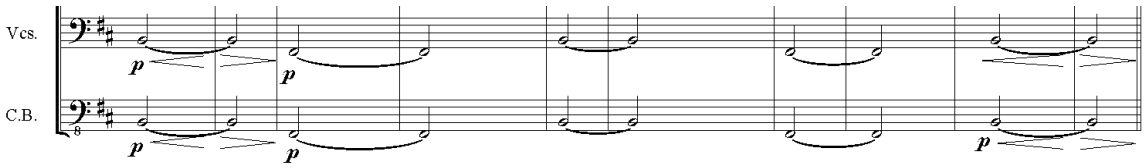


Illustration 4. Ostinato Bass Line (Low Strings, Measures 51-60)

Melodic and Rhythmic Patterns

This first movement features several melodic and rhythmic patterns that can be heard across various instruments throughout the movement. The first pattern emerges in measure 3, with the *crótalos* playing the previously mentioned syncopated ostinato rhythm (Illustration 5). This pattern is repeated eighteen times with the same notes and is last heard in measure 44, all on the same instrument.

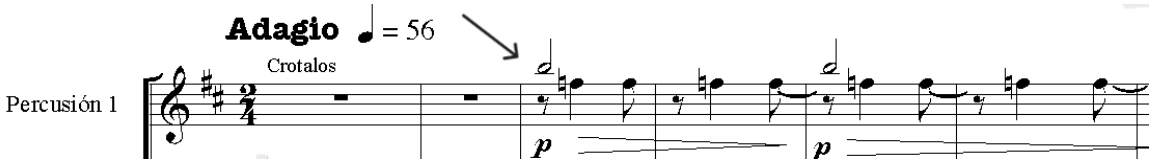


Illustration 5. Syncopated Ostinato Rhythm (Percussion 1, Measures 3-6)

The second pattern features melodic suspensions and retardations, which serve as essential textural resources. The next table includes all of these patterns.

Table 6. *Suspension and Retardation Patterns of Movement 1*

Measure	Instrument	Pitches	Rhythm
7 - 12	Cellos	D - C#	Half Note
8 - 12	Violas	G - F#	Dotted Half Note
13 - 18	First Violins	D - C#	Half Note
14 - 19	Violas	G - F#	Dotted Half Note
19 - 21	Solo Bassoon	D - C#	Dotted Quarter Note
19 - 21	First Violins	D - C#	Half Note
20 - 28	Violas	G - F#	Dotted Half Note
21 - 23	Second Violins	D - C#	Half Note
24 - 26	First Violin	D - C#	Quarter Note
25 - 26	Solo Bassoon	D - C#	Quarter Note
26 - 28	Second Violins	D - C#	Half Note
28 - 29	Solo Bassoon	D - C#	Dotted Quarter Note
31 - 34	Violas	G - F#	Dotted Eighth Note + Sixteenth Note
34	First Violins	C# - D	Quarter Note
36 - 38	Second Violins	D - C#	Half Note
37 - 39	Violas	G - F#	Dotted Half Note
40 - 44	First Violins	D - C#	Dotted Whole Note
45 - 48	First Violins	F# - E#	Half Note
46 - 51	Violas	G - F#	Dotted Eighth Note + Sixteenth Note
53 - 56	First Violins	F# - E#	Half Note
54 -59	Violas	G - F#	Dotted Eighth Note + Sixteenth Note
61	First Violins	C# - D	Quarter Note
62 - 65	First Violins	C# - D	Half Note
62 - 65	Second Violins	E# - C#	Quarter Note
68	First Violins	C# - D	Quarter Note

Table. 6. (continued)

Measure	Instrument	Pitches	Rhythm
69 - 73	Violas	E# - C#	Quarter Note
69 - 72	First Violins	C# - D	Half Note
72 - 75	Second Violins	G - F#	Half Note

The composer primarily creates the string accompaniment using only three pitch combinations and a few similar rhythmic patterns. Combined with the ostinato bass line, these elements represent the majority of the string writing in the movement. The composer also employs these patterns as effective expressive devices, emphasizing their significance through increased dynamic levels, glissandos, and other markings that highlight their prominence in the orchestral sound. The two most notable examples of this are measures 13 (Illustration 6) and 46 (Illustration 7). These passages are marked as *espressivo* and *con gran dramatismo* in Italian and Spanish, respectively, translating to "expressive" and "with great drama."

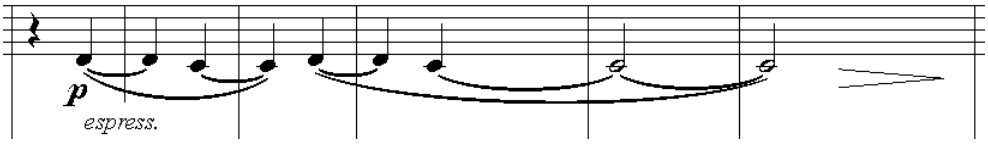


Illustration 6. Suspension Pattern (First Violins, Measure 13)

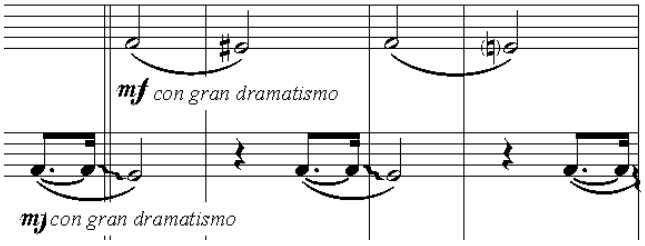


Illustration 7. Suspension Pattern (First Violins, Violas, Measure 46)

The third and final melodic and rhythmic pattern appears throughout the solo bassoon line. It is constructed using two recurring devices: grace notes and thirty-second notes functioning as ascending gestures, along with descending long notes with mordents (Illustration 8). This results in an ornamented solo line that is distinctive and recognizable within the simple orchestral texture. The contrast between these gestures illustrates brief and preliminary displays of both virtuosity and lyricism.

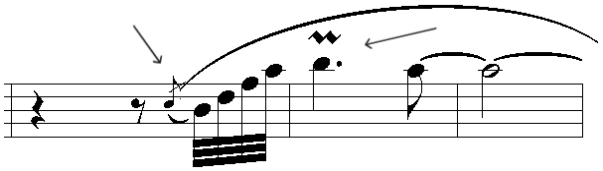


Illustration 8. Patterns in the Solo Line (Solo Bassoon, Measure 18-20)

Escalante Macaya constructs *Muerte de Clitemenestra* using limited melodic resources that are repeated to create a monotonous narrative. The harmonic and melodic developments are straightforward yet effective in shaping a somber identity that builds tension and suspense. This simplicity allows the movement to be classified as minimalistic, serving as an introduction to the overall piece and the subsequent, longer, more complex movements.

CHAPTER 4

DESASOSIEGO'S MOVEMENT 2, "GEEN WOORDE"

The Title and Its Meaning

The second movement is titled *Geen woorde*, which translates to "No Words" in Afrikaans. Afrikaans is a West Germanic language that is one of South Africa's official languages and is also spoken, to a lesser extent, in some other African countries. It evolved from Dutch in the 17th century, when European colonists settled in the Dutch Cape Colony. It is currently the third most widely-spoken language in the country. ("Afrikaans Language" 2025)

Carlos Escalante Macaya studied and lived in South Africa, where the inspiration for the title undeniably originates. He notes that *Geen woorde* "definitely relates to the dark mood of the piece." (Escalante Macaya 2025) Despair and hopelessness, the central themes of *Desasosiego*, frequently limit human verbal abilities. Isolation and a lack of words can be common symptoms of depression, as verbal interaction often feels pointless during deep sadness. Instrumental music is non-verbal and can convey emotions that are too complex for words. The composer creates a middle movement that encapsulates the desperation experienced when words fall short, revealing an intense internal struggle.

Harmonic Analysis

The second movement maintains the tense harmonic atmosphere established in the first movement, employing various dissonances and other compositional techniques

that were not previously used. The table below outlines the harmonic progression and highlights all the dissonances present in the solo bassoon line.

Table 7. *Harmonic Development of Movement 2*

Measure	Chord	Dissonances
E minor		
79	E minor - B major	None
80	E minor	None
81	E minor - B Major	None
82	G Major	C, F#
83	F# diminished - E minor	None - F#
84	B Major - F# diminished	None - None
85	F# diminished 7 - B minor	None - A
86	Tone Cluster - B Major	All - None
87	E minor - B Major	**F#** - None
88	E minor	**F#**
89	E minor - B Major	**F# - G**
90	G Major	**C**
91	A minor - G Major 7	None
92	B Major - F# diminished 7	**E - G**
93	F# diminished 7 - B minor	**G - A**
94	Tone Cluster - B Major	**All - G**
95	E minor - B Major	**F#** - None
96	E minor	**C**, **F#**, **A**
97	E minor - B Major	None - None
98	G Major	C, **F#**, **A#**
99	F# diminished - G Major 7	None - None

Table 7. (continued)

Measure	Chord	Dissonances
100	B Major 7	C, **G**
101	F# diminished 7	D, **B**
102	B Major 7	D, **G**
103	F# minor	**G**
104	G Major 7	C#
105	F# minor	**G**
106	A Major	None
107	D Major - G Major 7	None - None
108	E# diminished 7	C, **F#**
109 - 110	B chord (no third) 7	**G**
111	F# minor	**G**
112	G Major	C#
113	B minor	**C**, E
114	C# diminished 7	F#
115	D Major - G Major 7	None - None
116	E# diminished 7	C, **F#**
117 - 118	B chord (no third) 7	None
119 - 120	B Major 7	None
121	B minor	C
122	F# Major 7	None
B minor		
123	B minor	C#
124	Tone Cluster - F# Major 7	**All** - G
125	B minor 7 - F# diminished	E - G, B
126	E# diminished	A

Table 7. (continued)

Measure	Chord	Dissonances
127	F# minor 7	**D**, **B**
128	D Major	**E**, **E#**
129	B minor 7 - D minor 7	None - None
130	B minor 7	E, G
131	B minor 7	E
132	B chord (no third) 7 - F# Major 7	F - **E#**
133	B minor 7 - A# diminished	**E** - **D**, **E#**
134 - 135	Solo bassoon line	n/a
136	B minor - D minor 7	None - E
137	Minor Second - D Major - Tritone - B diminished	All - None - All - None
138	B minor 7	**E**, E#, F
139	B minor 7	E#, F
140	B minor - F# chord (no third) 7	**E#**
141	B minor - A Major - French Augmented Sixth - B minor	**E**, **A** - None - None - **E#**
142 - 143	Minor Seconds	**All**
144	B minor - A major - E minor - G Major - F# minor - E Major	None - None - None - None - None - A#
145	F# Major - G# minor	G, B - C, C##, A
146 - 147	D# minor - Minor Second (fermata)	E, G#, A
G minor		
148	Minor Seconds	**All**
149	Bb Major	None
150	G minor - Tone Cluster	C#, Eb, **A** - All
151	Minor Second - A diminished - Tone Cluster - F Major - Tritone - Tone Cluster	**All** - None - **All** - None - None - None

Table 7. (continued)

Measure	Chord	Dissonances
152	A diminished	**D**, Bb
153	F Major - A diminished 7	D - **Bb**
154	G minor - Tone Cluster	C#, Eb, **A** - All
155	Bb Major 7	**C**, C#, Eb
156	G minor - Bb Major 7	None - None
157	Eb Major 7 - Bb Major 7	None - C, **F#**, G#
158	F Major - F# diminished 7	D, Bb - Eb
159 - 194	G minor (Cadenza)	n/a

This movement features minor keys that define three distinct sections: the first in E minor, the second in B minor, similar to the first movement, and the third in G minor. Unlike the first movement, most chords include thirds, and the first cadences are introduced, which gives this movement a stronger sense of phrasing and structure. Along with the faster tempo, the composer employs numerous chords that change frequently, contributing to the directionality and momentum of the movement.

The harmonic progression of the introduction is relatively traditional, but after an unexpected tone cluster, the solo bassoon enters, playing an energetic line filled with dissonances and unresolved sevenths against the orchestra. The strings continue to play within traditional harmonies after the solo bassoon enters, yet there is constant instability as the solo line persistently clashes with the accompaniment. There are many instances in which the strings have tone clusters and minor seconds, but these occur sporadically, while the solo line adopts a dissonant role that conveys ongoing discomfort.

Structural Analysis

The harmony of this movement is structured into three distinct sections and several episodes, as outlined in the table below. The first section features two different episodes that repeat in nearly identical ways. The second and third sections include longer episodes that are not repeated but are separated by pauses and fermatas. The final episode showcases an extended solo bassoon cadenza with some percussion interjections.

Table 8. *Form Structure of Movement 2*

Measure	Episodes	Large Sections	Tonal Center
79 - 86	Episode 1a	Section A	E minor
87 - 94	Episode 1b		E minor
95 - 102	Episode 1c		E minor
103 - 110	Episode 2a		transitional
111 - 118	Episode 2b		transitional
118 - 122	Episode 2c		transitional
123 - 135	Episode 3	Section B	B minor
136 - 147	Episode 4		B minor transitional
148 - 158	Episode 5	Section C	G minor
159 - 194	Episode 6 (Cadenza)		G minor transitional

The first section is in E minor, as established in the opening measures with the first cadence of the piece (Illustration 9). Section A is the most harmonically and structurally traditional due to its tonal accompaniment and regular episodic development. The first episode consists of eight measures and is played three times with only slight variations in orchestration and rhythm. The second episode is also eight measures long

and played three times, while the third iteration lasts just four measures and serves as a transition into the next section. Both episodes exhibit a dance-like quality, with the orchestral accompaniment and solo bassoon interacting within a lively rhythmic groove in 3/4 time.

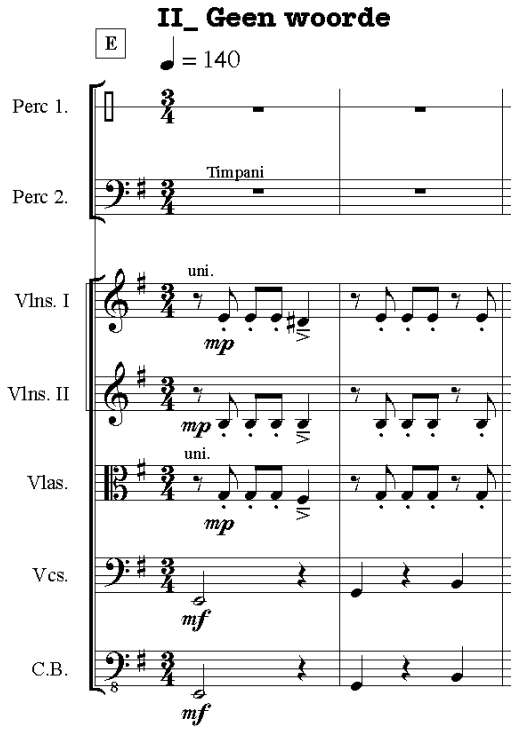


Illustration 9. First Cadence (Measures 1-2)

The second and third sections feature a more irregular harmony and structure. The harmonic progression appears less stable and more dissonant, while the episodes feature uneven phrases with various fleeting melodic gestures. The tempo suddenly shifts to a slow 6/8 meter at the beginning of Section B, with the solo bassoon presenting an unaccompanied initial statement that leads to a highly dissonant tone cluster with the violins (Illustration 10). The section concludes with a strong fermata in the low strings and percussion. A double bar line and new key signature defines the beginning of Section

C, which starts with a new episode that leads into the cadenza, which constitutes most of the section. These two sections illustrate the most apparent harmonic and rhythmic disconnection between the solo line and the accompaniment, both occupying the same space yet maintaining little musical relationship.

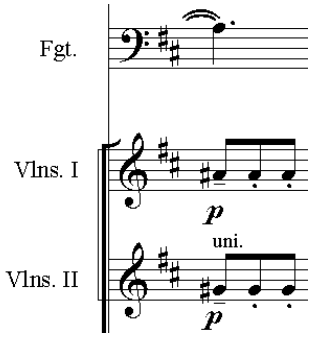


Illustration 10. Second Section's Tone Cluster (Solo Bassoon, Violins, Measure 124)

Melodic and Rhythmic Patterns

The first section utilizes various patterns to create forward rhythmic motion and a steady pulse. The accompaniment in the first episode relies on two rhythmic patterns: short syncopated eighth notes in the upper strings and fragmented half and quarter notes in the lower strings (Illustration 11). These patterns work together to establish a rhythmic groove over which the solo bassoon performs a more lyrical line. In the second episode, the same two rhythmic patterns are used to maintain a similar character, along with a third pattern of short repeated notes featuring steady off-beats and downbeats (Illustration 12). The soloist continues to play long legato phrases with some mordents reminiscent of the first movement.

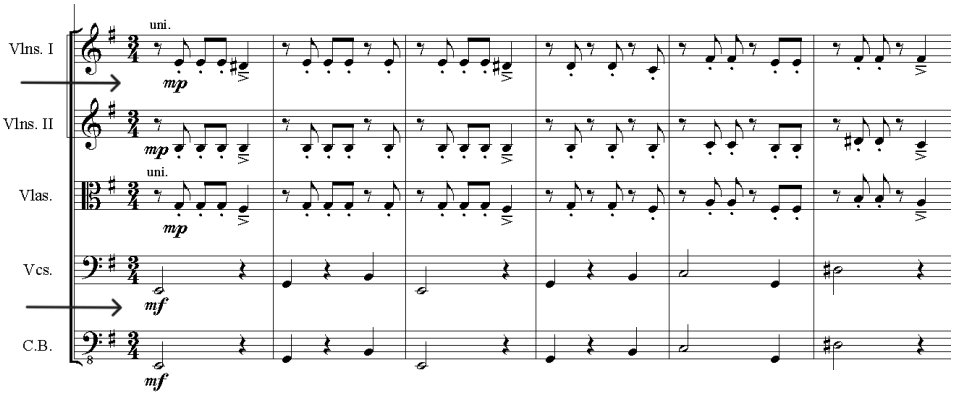


Illustration 11. First Episode's Two Rhytmic Patterns (Measures 79-84)

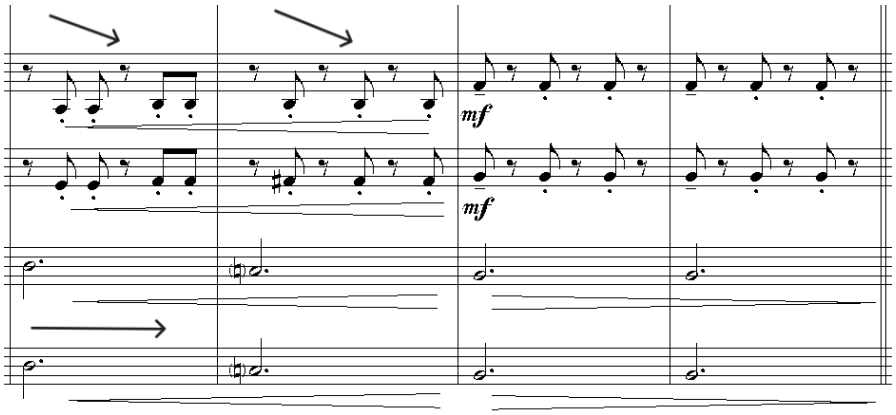


Illustration 12. Second Episode's Three Rhythmic Patterns (Measures 107-110)

The second section features two melodies with a playful character that the composer recycles with slight variations in both episodes, particularly in the solo line. The first melody is introduced by the first violins in measure 129, accompanied by an almost exact duplicate in the solo bassoon, along with a brief excerpt played by the cellos at measure 137 (Illustration 13). The second melody appears twice in the solo bassoon in measures 132 and 140, displaying some rhythmic variations while retaining the same note pattern (Illustration 14). In both cases, the second melody immediately follows the first one, creating a call-and-response musical effect.

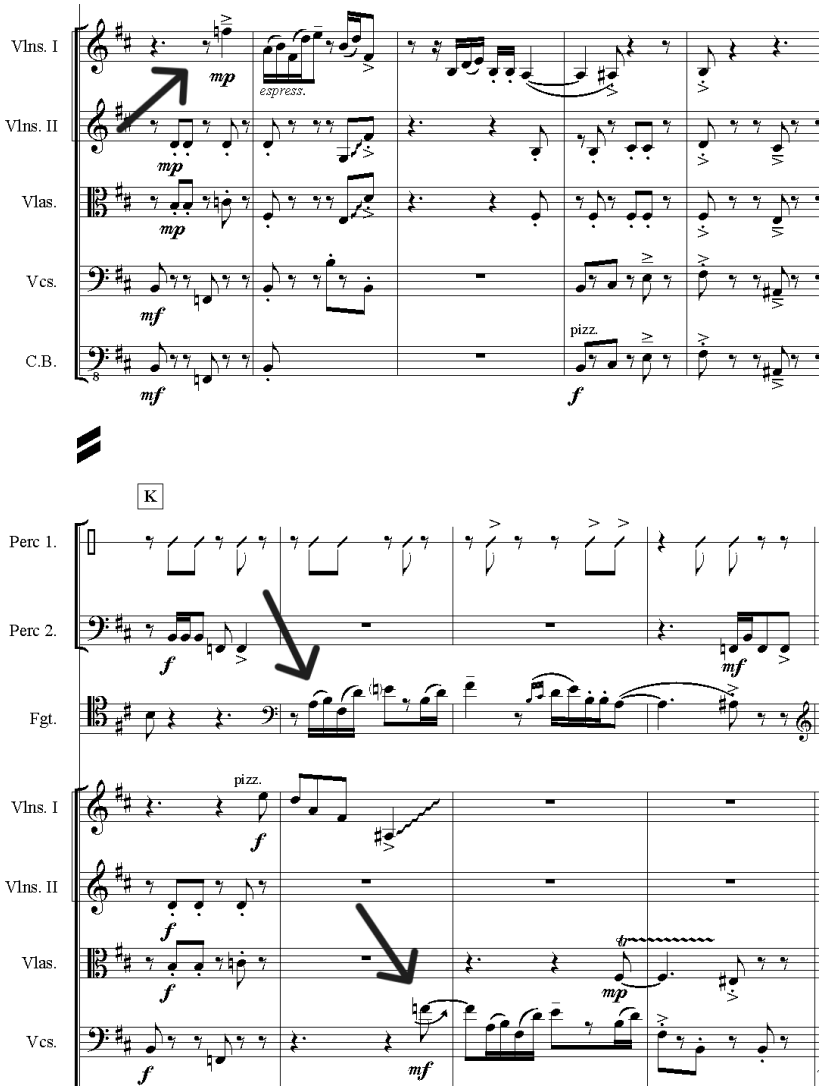


Illustration 13. Second Section's First Melodic Pattern (Measures 129-132, 137-139)

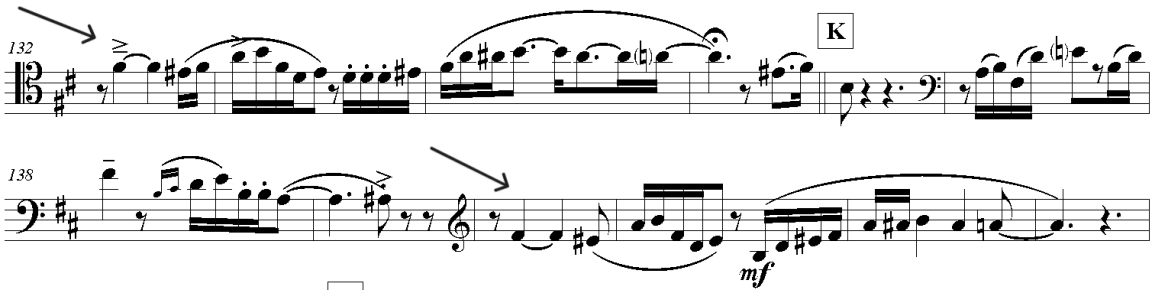


Illustration 14. Second Section's Second Melodic Pattern (Measures 134-137, 140-143)

The third section opens with a brief episode that sets the stage for the upcoming cadenza. The bassoon line plays three statements of the same melodic pattern, incorporating mordents, with each iteration growing longer and more insistent (Illustration 15). This effect suggests that the solo bassoon is trying to convey something, taking three attempts to build the confidence necessary to do so. The orchestra amplifies this effect by starting with a light accompaniment that becomes denser as more instruments join in, culminating in a crescendo that leads to the solo bassoon cadenza.

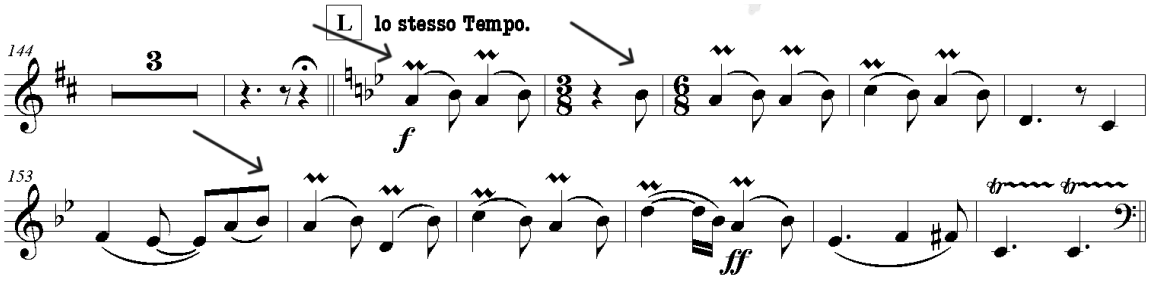


Illustration 15. Third Section's Melodic Pattern (Measures 148-158)

Cadenza

A cadenza is a section typically found in instrumental solo works, showcasing the soloist through an unaccompanied passage. This passage is performed with flexible rubato at the soloist's discretion, often merging virtuosity with lyricism. Escalante Macaya skillfully incorporates these qualities with rapid sixteenth-note scales and legato melodies of quarter and eighth notes. He also includes a few percussion interjections during the cadenza, with the gongs playing rhythms reminiscent of the first movement.

The cadenza consists of seven unique gestures and four chromatic interludes. Each of the seven gestures is derived from various minor scales and is repeated exactly once, as detailed in the next table.

Table 9. *Outline of Gestures and Interludes in the Cadenza*

Measure	Gesture	Tonal Center
159 - 160	Gesture 1	G minor
161 - 162	Gesture 1	G minor
162 - 164	Chromatic Interlude	
165 - 171	Gesture 2	G minor
171 - 176	Gesture 2	C minor - G minor
177 - 178	Gesture 3	G minor
179 - 180	Gesture 3	G minor
181 - 183	Chromatic Interlude	
184	Gesture 4	C minor - G minor
185 - 186	Gesture 4	C minor - G minor
187	Gesture 5	D minor
188	Gesture 5	D minor
189	Gesture 6	A minor - E minor - A minor
190	Gesture 6	A minor - E minor
190 - 191	Chromatic Interlude	
191 - 192	Gesture 7	D minor
192 - 193	Chromatic Interlude	
193 - 194	Gesture 7	D minor

The composer employs various compositional devices to reiterate the gestures. Some of these include:

- Literal repetition (Gestures 1, 4, and 5)
- Tonality change (Gesture 2)
- Octave change (Gestures 3, 6, and 7)

- Melodic shortening (Gestures 1, 2, and 6)
- Melodic lengthening (Gesture 4)

Literal repetition involves duplicating the same pitches and rhythms, which Escalante Macaya employs in certain parts of the gestures. The tonality change entails transposing a melody to a different key while maintaining its intervallic relationships and rhythm. The octave change shifts the same melodic gesture to a new octave while keeping the same pitches and rhythm. Melodic shortening reduces the gesture's length and the number of notes, whereas melodic lengthening increases them.

All these compositional devices create a cadenza rooted in echoes, with the solo bassoon playing each statement twice and incorporating clear, intentional, and meaningful changes. This can be interpreted as a form of reassurance, doubt, or both. Deliberate repetition inevitably provokes comparison, revealing what feels right and wrong. This dichotomy is the essence of the cadenza, as the solo bassoon seeks to communicate and find a path forward through these repeated gestures. The cadenza concludes on a fermata, like most sections in *Desasosiego*, with a soft, sustained note that transitions the piece into its third and final movement.

CHAPTER 5

DESASOSIEGO'S MOVEMENT 3, "ABAZI LUTHO"

The Title and Its Meaning

The third movement is titled *abazi lutho*, in isiZulu, which translates to "They Know Nothing." Commonly known as Zulu, isiZulu is a Bantu language and one of South Africa's official languages, spoken by about a quarter of the population. It serves as the language of the Zulu people, a native group in Southern Africa and a subgroup of the Nguni people. ("Zulu Language" 2024)

This is undoubtedly another linguistic influence from Escalante Macaya's time in South Africa. He notes that the meaning of *abazi lutho* stems from the idea that "the feeling of despair is often made worse by the fact that other people don't know what you are going through." (Escalante Macaya 2025) The discussion of depression in *Desasosiego* culminates in the theme of isolation, skillfully connected by the composer through the cadenza. A person suffering from severe depression is likely to feel isolated due to the lack of acknowledgment of their mental health struggles. The renowned British author George Orwell wrote, "Perhaps one did not want to be loved so much as to be understood." "They Know Nothing" highlights the emotional struggles silently endured by many individuals who go unnoticed.

Harmonic Analysis

The movement remains in F# minor from beginning to end, creating an intriguing harmonic arc in *Desasosiego*: B minor, D minor, B minor, G minor, and now F# minor.

This can represent scale degrees 1, 3, 1, 6, and 5 in the key of B minor, which consistently appears throughout the piece. It can also be interpreted as scale degrees 3, 5, 3, 1, and 7 in the key of G major. This large-scale tonal structure conveys a sense of brokenness, where Escalante Macaya uses minor keys deriving from a major triad and its leading tone, with the latter unconventionally ending the work. This unresolved tonal plan further exemplifies the influence of harmony in the tragic nature of the work.

The third movement shares a similar harmonic language with the second movement. It features progressive harmonic motion with a clear tonal center and numerous cadential moments, as shown in the table below. Again, dissonances continue the composition's obscure harmonic narrative. Like the second movement, the solo bassoon line contains multiple dissonances while maintaining a tense relationship with the orchestral accompaniment. These dissonances are highlighted in bold in the table below.

Table 10. *Harmonic Development of Movement 3*

Measure	Chord	Dissonances
F# minor		
195	F# - G#	None
196	F# minor m7	None
197	B chord - G#	None
198	F# minor	None
199	B chord m7 - G# diminished	None
200	F# minor	B#
201	B chord m7 - G# diminished m7	B#
202	F# minor - E# diminished	None
203	F# chord	G#

Table 10. (continued)

Measure	Chord	Dissonances
204	F# minor	B, **B#**
205	B chord - A Major M7	C#, **G#** - None
206	F# minor	**A#, B**
207	B chord m7 - G# diminished	C# - C#
208	F# minor m7 - E# diminished	None - **F#, A, B#**
209	F# chord	G#
210	F# minor m7	**D#**
211	B chord - Tone Cluster	**G# - All**
212	F# minor	D#, **A#, B**
213	B chord - G# diminished m7	**B# - A, B#**
214	F# minor M7 - G# diminished m7	None - **A, B#**
215	F# diminished m7 - E Major	C, D# - C, C#, F#, A
216	C chord - B chord	F#, A - C, G#
217	F# minor m7 - E chord	C - C, F#
218	C chord - Tone Cluster	F# - **All**
219	F# minor m7 - E chord	None - C, F#
220	C augmented - B chord	F#, A - C, G#
221	Solo Bassoon Only (F# minor)	
222	B chord m7 - F# minor	C, **E#** - C, G, B
223	F# chord	G#
224	F# minor	B, **B#**
225	B chord - A Major m7	C#, **G#** - None
226	F# minor	**A#, B**
227	B chord m7 - G# diminished m7	C#, **E, A#** - C#, **E**
228	F# minor m7 - E# diminished	**G#**, **B# - F#**

Table 10. (continued)

Measure	Chord	Dissonances
229	F# minor m7 - E Major	C, D#, B - C, **C#**, F#
230	C augmented - B Major	F# - E, G#
231	F# minor m7 - E Major	C, D#, B - C, **C#**, F#
232	C augmented M7 - Tone Cluster	F# - **All**
233	F# minor m7 - E Major	C, D# - C, **C#**, F#, A
234	Tone Cluster - B chord	**All** - C, **C#**, E, G#
235	Solo Bassoon Only (F# minor)	
236	B chord m7 - F# minor	C - C, G, B
237	Solo Bassoon Only (F# minor)	
238	C# chord m7 - D Major M7	C, F#, **A** - C, B
239	D minor - F# minor **M7**	**E**, **E#**, **A#** - None
240	B chord m7 - F# minor m7	C, C# - C, G#, B
241	C# Major m7 - F# minor	**F#**, **A** - **G#**, **B#**
242 - 246	Melodic Canon (F# minor)	
247 - 248	F# - C tritone	All
249	G# diminished m7	C, C#, A
250	F# minor	C, F#, G#, B
251	B minor - C augmented	C, C# - F#
252	E Major - E# diminished	A - None
253 - 254	Solo Bassoon + Marimba (F# minor)	
255	C# Major m7	F#, **B#**
256 -257	Solo Bassoon + Marimba (F# minor)	
258	E Major - E# diminished	**F#**, A - **C#**, **F#**, **B#**
259 - 260	B chord m7	C, C#
261	C# Major m7	F#, **A**

Table 10. (continued)

Measure	Chord	Dissonances
262 - 263	F# chord	C, B, **B#**
264	E Major - C# Major m7	**F#**, A - **E**, **F#**, **A**, **B#**
265 - 266	F#minor m7	C, **D**, **E#**, **G**, **B**, **B#**
267	E Major - C# Major m7	**C#**, **F#**, A, **B#** - None
268 - 269	F# minor m7	C, **D**, **B**, **B#**
270	E Major - C# Major m7	**C#**, **F#**, A, **B#** - **F#**
271	F# minor m7	C, **D**, **E**, **B**, **B#**
273	E Major - C# Major m7	**F#**, **A**, **B#** - **F#**, **B#**
274	F# minor m7 - C# minor	C, D#, B - C, F#
275	C augmented - B Major	F# - E, G#
276	F# minor m7 - E Major	C, D#, B - C, C#, F#
277	C augmented M7 - Tone Cluster	F# - **All**
278	F# minor m7 - E Major	C, D# - C, **C#**, F#, A
279	Tone Cluster - B chord	**All** - **C#**, G#
280	Solo Bassoon + Violins (E# + E minor)	
281	G# diminished m7 - A Major	C, **C#**, **A** - C, **F#**, B, **B#**
282	G# diminished m7 - A Major	C, **C#**, **A** - C, **F#**, B, **B#**
283	F# minor **M7**	C, **D**, **B**, **B#**
284	Tone Cluster	**All**
285	Tone Cluster - C# minor m7 - C# diminished m7	**All** - None - None
286	F# minor m7	F, G#

The movement features a recurring use of the note B#, which forms a tritone with F#. This is similar to the use of E#s in the first movement, which is the tritone to B, its previous tonal center. Both contribute to the persistent uneasiness of the piece. Another

similarity to the first movement is the use of pitch drones, derived from long phrases of short and repeated F#s and C#s, monotonously played by different string sections. The first rhythmic drone occurs in measure 203 (Illustration 16), while the second appears in measure 215 (Illustration 17), both played by the first violins. Although these two notes serve as the tonic and dominant pitches in the main key of the movement, they often become dissonant as the composer employs various chords during these pitch drones.

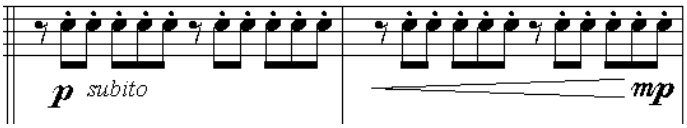


Illustration 16. First Drone Pitch (First Violins, Measure 203)

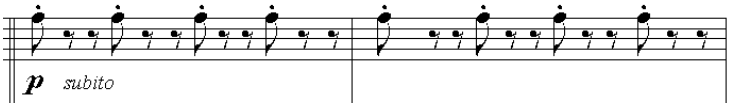


Illustration 17. Second Drone Pitch (First Violins, Measure 21)

Influence of Bitonality

Escalante Macaya frequently employs bitonality as a harmonic device in this movement. Bitonality is a compositional technique that uses two different tonal centers simultaneously. (Whittall 2001) The percussion accompaniment, primarily the marimba, features three distinct ostinato passages that repeat throughout most episodes of the movement but are in a different key from F# minor. These ostinatos clash with the strings and solo bassoon, with most of the dissonances in this movement arising from these interactions. This secondary tonal centers are not strongly established as they don't contain cadences, yet these ostinatos are clearly based in three different scales.

The first passage appears at measure 215 and is based on the A melodic minor scale (Illustration 18). The second passage appears at measure 222 and is based on the B minor scale (Illustration 19). The third passage appears at measure 229 and is based on the E Major scale (Illustration 20). The last two passages frequently use the note C natural as a flat second and sixth scale degree, respectively, serving as a chromatic mechanism and reinforcing the recurrent B# dissonance.

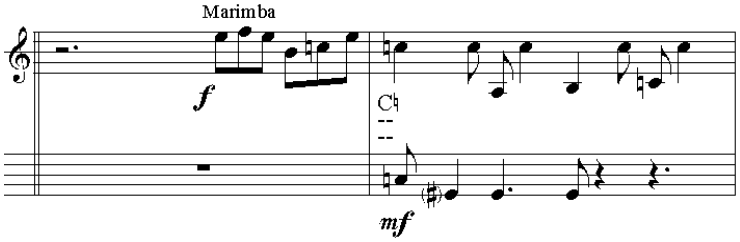


Illustration 18. First Bitonal Passage (Percussion, Measures 215-216)

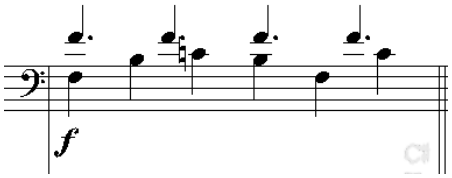


Illustration 19. Second Bitonal Passage (Percussion, Measure 222)

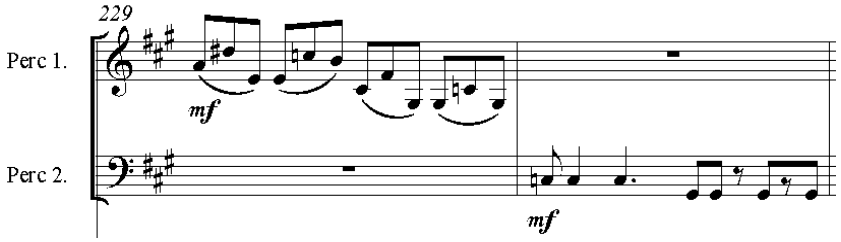


Illustration 20. Third Bitonal Passage (Percussion, Measures 229-230)

This bitonality may relate to the title of the movement. “They Know Nothing” implies a disconnect between the person suffering from depression and those around

them who are unaware. This suggests two contrasting perceptions of reality that coexist in the same space but are entirely different, sharing conceptual similarities with the bitonality used by the composer. The percussion instruments coexist with the strings, playing melodic material within the same rhythmic character but built on two different tonal centers. This disconnection is a crucial aspect of bitonality and likely a musical statement on the programmatic elements of the movement.

Structural Analysis

The third movement features the most fragmented structure of the piece. It is organized into distinct episodes, most of which are separated in the score by double bar lines added by the composer. All episodes are played at least three times, as detailed in the table below. These repetitions are irregular and do not follow a specific pattern, reflecting the rhapsodic nature of *Desasosiego*.

Table 11. *Form Structure of Movement 3*

Measure	Episode	Length
195 - 202	Episode 1a	8 measures
203 - 208	Episode 1b	6 measures
209 - 214	Episode 1c	6 measures
215 - 220	Episode 2a	6 measures
221 - 222	Episode 3a	2 measures
223 - 228	Episode 1d	6 measures
229 - 234	Episode 2b	6 measures
235 - 241	Episode 3b	7 measures
242 - 246	Bridge	5 measures
247 - 252	Episode 3c	6 measures

Table 11. (continued)

Measure	Episode	Length
253 - 258	Episode 3d	6 measures
259 - 261	Episode 4a	3 measures
262 - 267	Episode 4b	6 measures
268 - 273	Episode 4c	6 measures
274 - 279	Episode 2c	6 measures
280 - 286	Coda	7 measures

The structural form can be summarized in the following pattern: 1-1-1-2-3-1-2-3-Bridge-3-3-4-4-4-2-Coda. The first episode occurs four times, with the initial instance being slightly longer and serving as an orchestral introduction. The second episode occurs in its entirety three times. The third episode occurs four times, with the first instance being a shorter two-bar version. The fourth episode occurs three times, with the first instance being slightly shorter. Most of these episodes are six measures long and exhibit idiosyncratic melodic and rhythmic patterns. There are two additional brief sections outside these four main episodes: a five-measure bridge connecting two of the third episodes, and a final seven-measure coda.

Melodic and Rhythmic Patterns

This movement is set in lively 12/8 time. The composer includes two important instructions alongside the tempo that shape its character: *danzando* and *muy rítmico*. These markings translate to “dancing” and “very rhythmic” in Spanish. The rhythm plays a crucial role in the movement's personality, featuring sections built on three distinct

rhythmic patterns that evoke a sense of dance. These patterns repeat multiple times throughout the movement, reflecting another influence of minimalism.

The first rhythmic pattern appears in measure 195 as an ostinato bass line made up of dotted half-notes in the low strings and timpani. It opens the movement alongside two additional expressive markings in Spanish: *con firmeza* and *muy decidido y enfático* (Illustrations 21). These markings translate to "with firmness" and "very decided and emphatic," respectively. This pattern is essential in the first and second episodes and briefly reappears in the third.

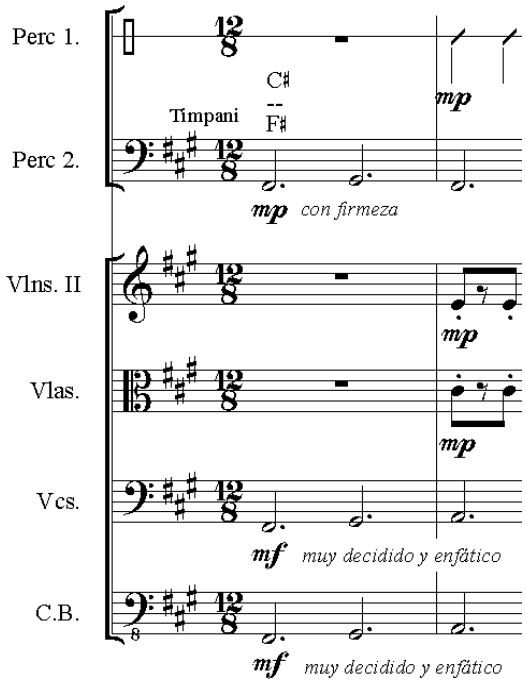


Illustration 21. First Rhythmic Pattern (Percussion, Cellos, Basses, Measure 195)

The second rhythmic pattern appears in measure 196 and consists of repeated quarter notes and eighth notes in the percussion and middle strings, respectively (Illustration 22). This creates a hemiola against the main dotted quarter-note pulse. A hemiola is a type of polyrhythm that divides the pulse into unequal parts (Newman 2023),

such as the three against two created by this pattern. This three-against-two hemiola is a common rhythm found in dances from Africa and Latin America. (Rushton 2001) Escalante Macaya noted that he drew inspiration from these dances as a Latino composer and former resident of South Africa. This pattern regularly appears throughout all episodes.

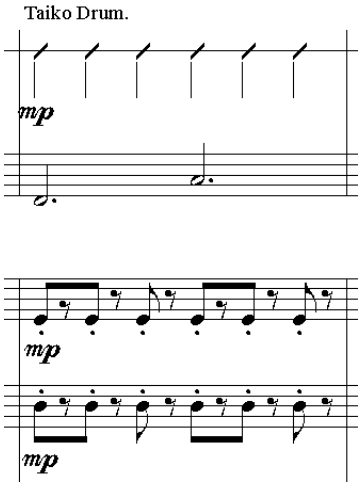


Illustration 22. Second Rhythmic Pattern (Drum, Second Violins, Violas, Measure 196)

The third rhythmic pattern appears in measure 200 and consists of syncopated, short eighth notes that enhance the lively motion of the episode. It is featured in the second violins and violas during the first and second episodes (Illustration 23), in the low strings as a brief interruption of the first rhythmic pattern (Illustration 24), and in all the strings as rhythmically unified statements in the third and fourth episodes (Illustration 25). The first and second bitonal passages also include a variation of this rhythm in the percussion.

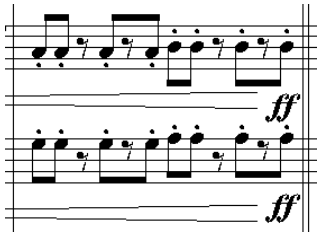


Illustration 23. Third Rhythmic Pattern (Second Violins, Violas, Measure 202)

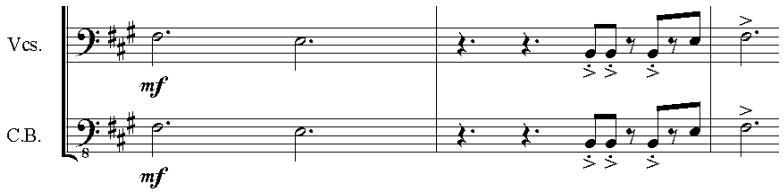


Illustration 24. Third Rhythmic Pattern (Cellos, Basses, Measures 229-231)

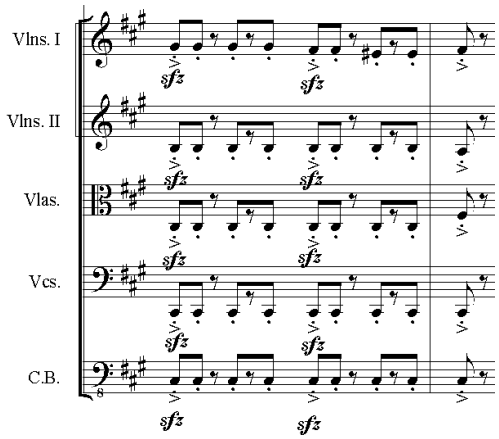


Illustration 25. Third Rhythmic Pattern (String Section, Measure 255)

The previously-mentioned pitch drones and bitonal passages represent additional rhythmic and melodic patterns. These patterns consist of short musical motifs that are repeated multiple times, contributing to the identity of all episodes. The first drone pitch (Illustration 16) is a main element of the first episode and appears in both the third and fourth episodes. The second drone pitch (Illustration 17) is a main element in the second and fourth episodes. The first and third bitonal passages (Illustrations 18 and 20) are

featured in the second episode, while the second bitonal passage (Illustration 20) is found in the third and fourth episodes.

Finally, two unique episodes also utilize some of these patterns: the bridge and the coda. The bridge appears in the middle movement and employs the second bitonal passage (Illustration 20). A brief canon is developed from a new melodic pattern in the new meter of 6/4, starting with the second violins and progressing to the violas, solo bassoon, cellos, and basses (Illustration 26). This bridge concludes with a strong tritone that uses a glissando to get back into the rhythmic and original lively tempo of 12/8.

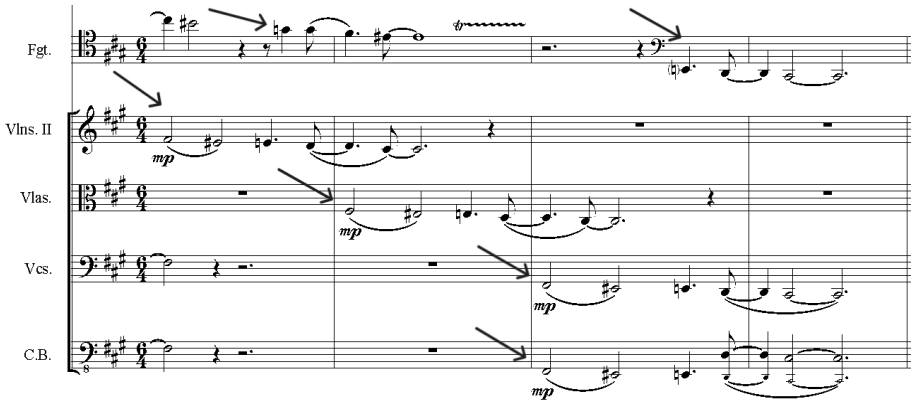


Illustration 26. Bridge's Canon (Measures 242-245)

The composition concludes with the most exhilarating music of the piece in the final coda. It also features the second bitonal passage in the percussion and the invigorating third rhythmic pattern. These elements are continuously repeated and supported by a substantial crescendo from piano to forte, multiple sforzandos, and a final harmonic progression full of tension. The orchestra finishes in unison rhythm but with distressing tone clusters that convey a thrilling agitation, leading to the final fermata chord. This fermata contains two strong dissonances: a major second in the first violins and a richly textured glissando rising and falling from the recurring dissonance of a major

seventh, extending the persistent theme of despair until the last moment of *Desasosiego* (Illustration 27).

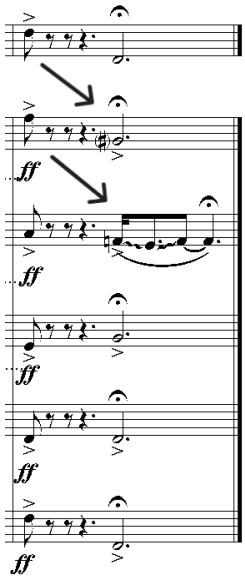


Illustration 27. Final Chord in Movement 3 (Measure 286)

Aside from the brief solo bassoon intervention that features fragments of the melodic pattern during the bridge episode (Illustration 26), the solo line does not incorporate the rhythmic or melodic patterns used to create the orchestral accompaniment of the movement. In parallel with the harmonic disconnection between the soloist and the accompaniment, the bassoonist plays long legato phrases consisting of sustained notes and arpeggiated eighth notes. This contrasts with the strong marcato and rhythmic character of the accompaniment, as the orchestra plays with verticality while the solo bassoon plays with horizontality. Nonetheless, the music remains agitated, with the soloist rapidly alternating between upward and downward motions and utilizing the full range of the instrument. This melodic treatment can be seen as another statement about disconnection, reflecting a deliberate meaning behind Escalante Macaya's *abazi lutho*.

CHAPTER 6

PERFORMANCE NOTES FOR THE SOLOIST

Interpreting the Programmatic Elements

The previous three chapters thoroughly analyzed the form, harmony, rhythm, and melody of all three movements. This analysis gives the soloist valuable insights into how the composer uses music to express the work's programmatic elements. Escalante Macaya's compositional style is based on predetermined literal and emotional frameworks, where meaning comes first, and the music follows. *Desasosiego* seeks to convey the human struggles of despair, and all musical and technical choices should strive for an expressive performance that convincingly communicates these emotions.

From a harmonic standpoint, it is essential to understand the role of dissonances, especially in the second and third movements. These movements contain a significant amount of dissonance within the bassoon line, which creates a sense of disconnection with the orchestral accompaniment. These dissonances should be emphasized to better serve their programmatic purpose of depicting emotional struggles.

It is essential to comprehend the role of repetition in the work from melodic, rhythmic, and structural perspectives. The various patterns and episodes discussed earlier should shape the soloist's interpretation of the piece. Emphasizing the differences in repetitions while maintaining the musical character of repeated statements is musically compelling. Likewise, the cadenza's repeated gestures enable the soloist to create contrast. Each call statement has its response, and a convincing performance should make this dichotomy audibly apparent to the audience.

The choices made regarding tempo, volume, vibrato, tone color, and phrasing are indispensable in actualizing each section's musical character. The first movement is obscure and suspenseful, the second movement's first section is agitated and dance-like, the second movement's second section is unsettling and distressful, the cadenza is emotional and dramatic, and the third movement is tense and passionate. Escalante Macaya indicates specific tempos and dynamics that should be respected to achieve the different musical characters and allow the bassoon to be heard at all times. The style of vibrato, tone color, and phrasing is more subjective and personally chosen by the soloist, yet should produce a tragic and stirring sound.

Mordents, Grace Notes, Trills, and Portamentos

Escalante Macaya incorporates numerous ornaments, such as mordents, trills, grace notes, and portamentos. These elements are crucial to the music's character, and their execution should be carefully planned. It is possible to play some of these ornaments with standard fingerings, but others will need the use of alternative fingerings to play accurately what the composer wrote.

Alternative fingerings are often used to facilitate certain challenging techniques, such as playing fast, playing soft, playing high notes, and playing in tune. These ornaments fall into the first category, playing fast. These alternative fingerings may not have the same quality of sound as standard fingerings, but in rapid passages their sound difference is imperceptible. As an important note, the alternative fingerings suggested in this dissertation are based on my experience and may not work for other bassoonists or on certain instruments. Additionally, the bassoon's tessitura will be divided into three register groups to better name these fingerings: low, middle, tenor, and high (Figure 2).

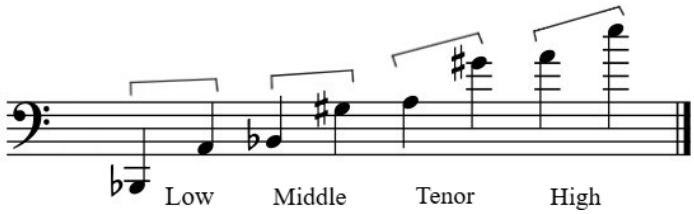


Figure 2. Bassoon's Tessitura

A mordent is an ornament that involves a quick alternation between the main note and the note directly above or below it. ("Mordent" 2001) The solo bassoon line features mordents in all the movements, using only upper neighbortones and serving as essential musical gestures. There are ten mordents in the first movement, made up of the following note combinations: tenor D-E, tenor F-G, tenor F#-G, tenor E-F#, and tenor C#-D. Given the slow tempo and the fact that the ornament leads into long notes, these mordents can be comfortably executed with standard fingerings. The soloist can adjust their speed to convey interpretative nuance, yet the gesture would still be technically manageable with standard fingerings.

The second movement features eighteen mordents across two sections, each with tempos significantly faster than the first movement. Some of these mordents can be executed using standard fingerings, but alternative fingerings, typically used for trills, greatly facilitate the execution of many of the mordents. The next figures illustrate the recommended alternative trill fingerings for the following mordents: high B-C in measure 101 (Figure 2); tenor F#-G in measures 103, 104, 111, and 112 (Figure 3); middle F#-G in measure 120 (Figure 4); high A-Bb in measures 148, 150, 151, 154, 155, and 156 (Figure 5); high C-D in measures 151 and 155 (Figure 6); tenor D-Eb in measure 154 (Figure 7); and high D-Eb in measure 156 (Figure 8).

These trill fingerings should start with all the black-colored keys and tone holes pressed down in the initial fingering, and then creating the ornament by alternating between releasing and pressing the grey-colored keys and tone holes, as shown in the final fingering. Some of these fingerings require the player to utilize an additional step, playing the initial fingering, moving to a secondary fingering, and creating the ornament with the grey-colored keys and tone holes of the last fingering. The fingerings in these figures sould be executed from left to right.

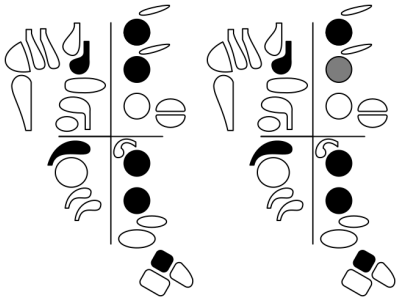


Figure 3. High B-C Trill Fingerings

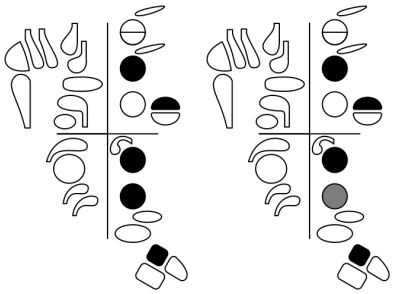


Figure 4. Tenor F#-G Trill Fingerings

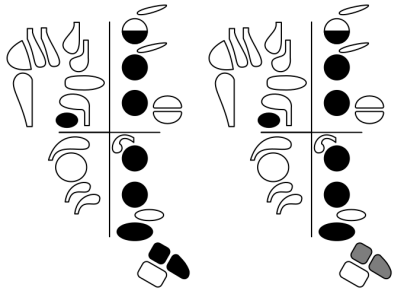


Figure 5. Middle F#-G Trill Fingerings

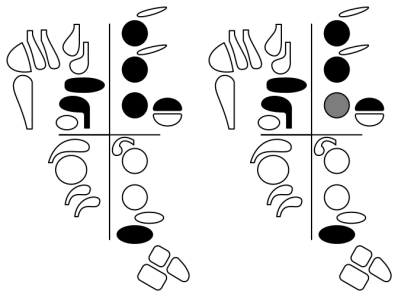


Figure 6. High A-Bb Trill Fingerings

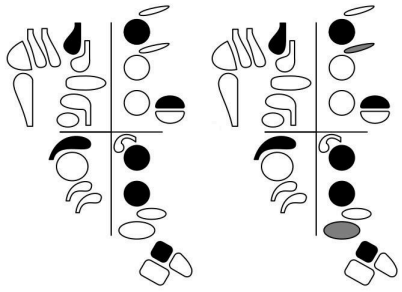


Figure 7. High C-D Trill Fingerings

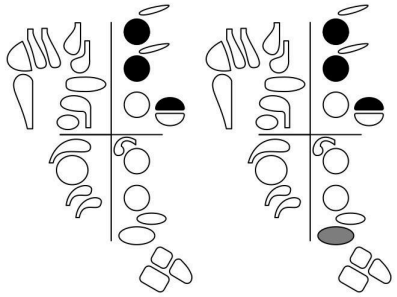


Figure 8. Tenor D-Eb Trill Fingerings

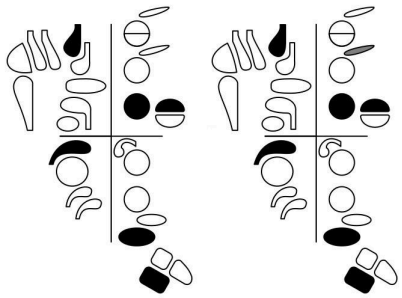


Figure 9. High D-Eb Trill Fingerings

Four mordents are found in the third movement and always in quarter notes between fast eight-note passages, for which alternative fingerings are recommended. This includes middle F#-G# in measure 268 (Figure 9), tenor B-C# in measures 269 and 270 (Figure 10), and high A-B in measure 269 (Figure 11).

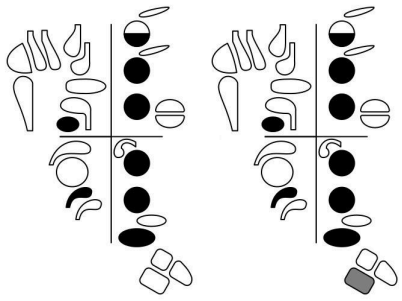


Figure 10. Middle F#-G# Trill Fingerings

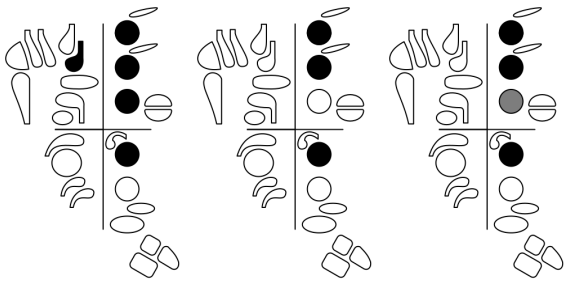


Figure 11. Tenor B-C# Trill Fingerings

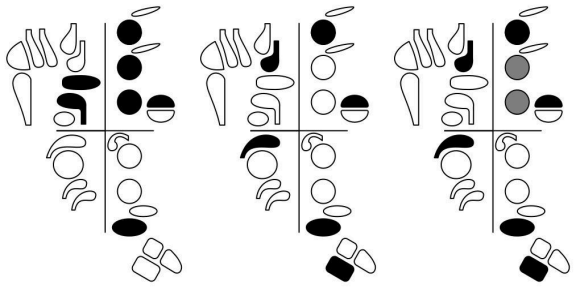


Figure 12. High A-B Trill Fingerings

A grace note is an ornamental note written smaller than the main musical text. It has no measured length and does not add extra time to the music. Grace notes are typically played quickly; however, this depends on the speed of the music, the surrounding rhythms, and the nature of the ornament. (Seletsky 2001) The first movement features eight groups of grace notes that are essential to the character of the solo line. Their speed should be interpreted at the soloist's discretion, as the slow tempo of the movement allows for various interpretations. The first grace notes consist of a single note and appear in measures 16, 18 (Illustration 8), 21, 23, and 26. Since they are attached to fast thirty-second notes, it is advisable to play them quickly to maintain the rhythm of the main text. The next group of grace notes contains two notes in measures 32 and 59, offering greater freedom of interpretation as they lead into long notes. The final group of grace notes comprises three notes in measure 53, which also leads into a long note but is immediately followed by three thirty-second notes with the same pitches (Illustration 28). Therefore, it is advisable to play the grace notes either slower or faster than the thirty-second notes to avoid sounding like the same rhythm. The second movement has ten groups of grace notes in measures 88, 89, 95, 96, 108, 110, 116, 118, and 138. As the tempo and rhythm of the movement are quite fast, there is little room for interpretation, and all grace notes should be played quickly.

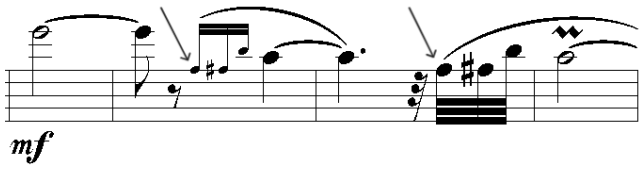


Illustration 28. Grace Notes vs. Thirty-Second Notes (Solo Bassoon, Measures 52-55)

A trill is an ornament that rapidly alternates between the main note and the next diatonic note. ("Trill" 2001) Due to its speedy nature, most trills on the bassoon require the use of alternative fingerings that facilitate the success of this embellishment. Escalante Macaya uses trills eight times in the second and third movements. They all require alternative fingerings since it is impossible to quickly play these combinations of pitches with the usual standard fingerings. The figures below illustrate the recommended alternative fingerings for the following trills: high A-B in measures 93-94 (Figure 11); tenor C-D in measures 158 (Figure 12); tenor E#-F# in measure 243 (Figure 13); tenor B#-C# in measure 255 (Figure 14); high B#-C# in measure 284 (Figure 15); tenor C#-D in measure 284 (Figure 16); middle G#-A in measure 285 (Figure 17); and middle C#-D in measure 285 (Figure 18).

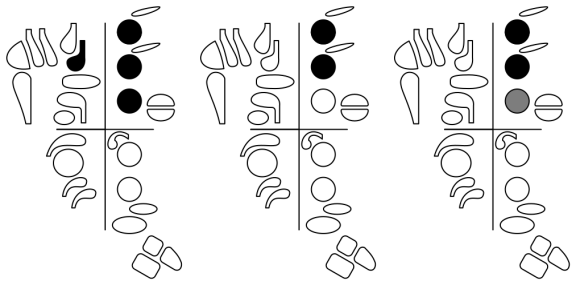


Figure 13. Tenor C-D Trill Fingerings

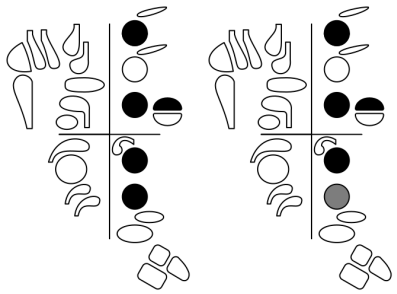


Figure 14. Tenor E#-F# Trill Fingerings

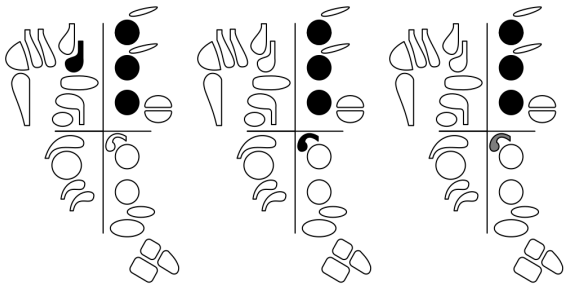


Figure 15. Tenor B#-C# Trill Fingerings

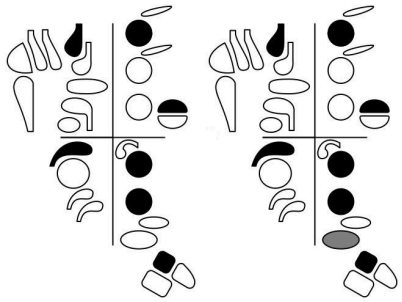


Figure 16. High B#-C# Trill Fingerings

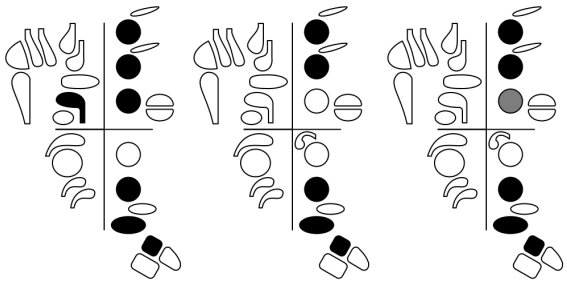


Figure 17. Tenor C#-D Trill Fingerings

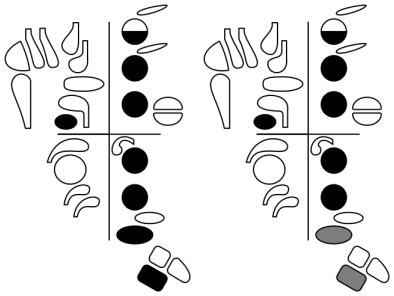


Figure 18. Middle G#-A Trill Fingerings

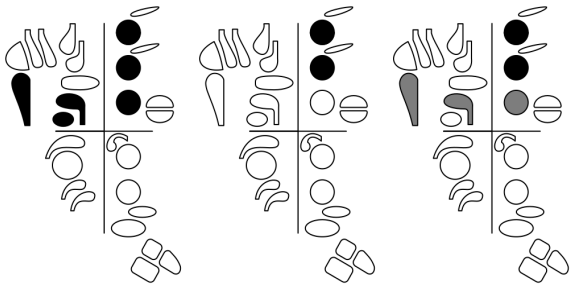


Figure 19. Middle C#-D Trill Fingerings

A portamento is an ornament akin to the glissando, involving a slide between two different pitches. (Harris 2001) It is commonly found in music for voice and string instruments, as they can execute it easily. However, the development of extended techniques in woodwind instruments has prompted composers to incorporate portamentos into their woodwind writing. Escalante Macaya explains this technique in the glossary of extended techniques for this work (Table 3), which begins half a step below the written note and bends upward. There are two portamentos in the solo bassoon line, both in the cadenza and requiring alternative fingerings. The next figures present fingerings for these two portamentos: high C-C# in measure 170 (Figure 19) and high C#-D in measure 176 (Figure 20). These fingerings should be played by pressing all the colored keys and tone holes down, both black an gray, and slowly sliding the fingers off the grey-colored tone holes.

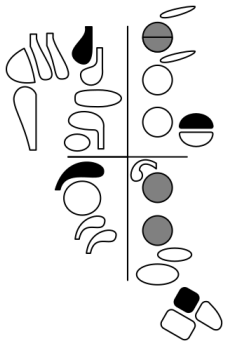


Figure 20. High C-C# Portamento Fingerings

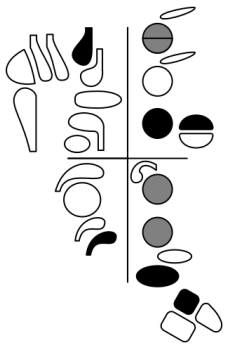


Figure 21. High C#-D Portamento Fingerings

Alternative Fingerings for Technical Passages

The cadenza and the third movement of *Desasosiego* feature numerous challenging sections that require a considerable amount of technical skill. The cadenza has a tempo marking of two hundred for the eighth note, which calls for very fast sixteenth-note passages across the bassoon's low, middle, tenor, and high registers. The third movement is marked at one hundred twenty-eight for the dotted quarter note, demanding very fast eighth-note passages that include the additional challenge of slurred arpeggios in the key of A major, which is technically demanding for bassoon players. Consequently, some alternative fingerings greatly facilitate the technical cleanliness of these passages and enable the performer to play at the indicated tempos.

The first set of alternative fingerings can be applied in the second half of the cadenza, which is technically more demanding. Most of these fingerings assist in playing these technical passages due to their similarity to the standard fingerings in the preceding notes. These include middle Eb in measures 184 and 185 (Figure 21); tenor Ab/G# in measures 184, 185, 186, and 190 (Figure 22); and high A in measure 184 (Figure 23). Furthermore, the high Bbs in measures 187, 188, and 190 are preceded by As, for which the previously mentioned A-Bb trill fingering can be employed (Figure 4).

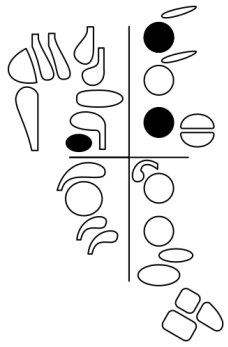


Figure 22. Alternative Middle Eb Fingering

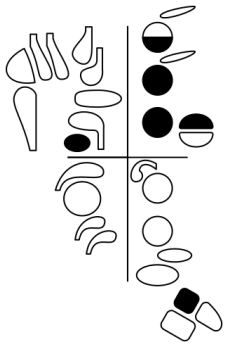


Figure 23. Alternative Tenor Ab/G# Fingering

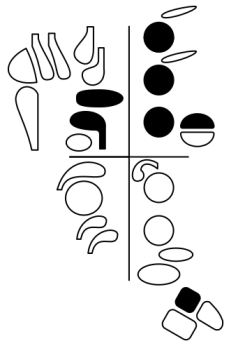


Figure 24. Alternative High A Fingering

The second set of alternative fingerings can be applied to the third movement. This include the notes high G# (Figure 22) and high A (Figure 23) previously mentioned, and middle F# (Figure 24) and tenor C# (Figure 25). These notes appear through the entire movement and the use of alternative fingerings should be decided at the soloist's discretion and taking into consideration the surrounding notes.

Additionally, this movement uses two very high notes, which are not used within fast passages but are articulated, for which alternative fingerings may facilitate their playing. These include high D# (Figure 26) and high E (Figure 27) in measures 229-230.

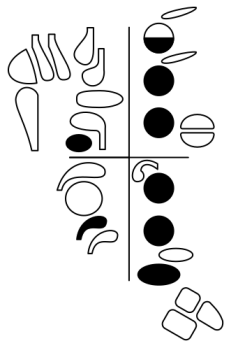


Figure 25. Alternative Middle F# Fingering

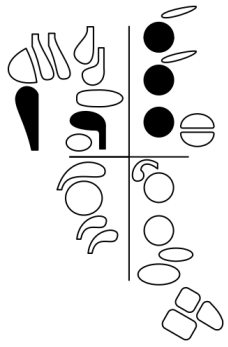


Figure 26. Alternative Tenor C# Fingering

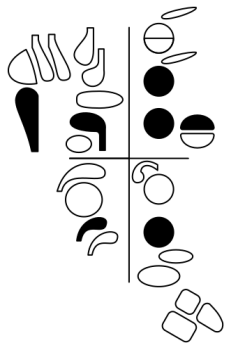


Figure 27. Alternative High D# Fingering

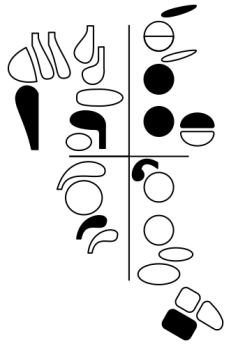


Figure 28. Alternative High E Fingering

All the recommendations in this chapter seek to minimize the technical challenges in *Desasosiego* so that the soloist can effectively communicate the meaning behind the work. A musically convincing rendition of the work must be technically fluent.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The work *Desasosiego* by Carlos Escalante Macaya is an important addition to the bassoon solo repertoire. It is brilliantly crafted, with music that showcases the instrument's capabilities and utilizes fascinating textures in the orchestral accompaniment. Its interdisciplinary approach shapes a composition that is profoundly meaningful and successful in captivating the listener. It represents emotions not often depicted in art music but very common among humans.

Escalante Macaya utilizes the rich sound and large range of the bassoon to depict topics of depression and tragedy. From serenity to thrilling agitation, *Desasosiego* approaches these obscure emotions in a way that connects with the audience. It is not often that music seeks to represent mental health struggles such as depression, yet it is incredibly common in today's increasingly aware society. This work can have an impactful reaction on the listener who comprehends its programmatic nature while functioning as a call for awareness around such an important topic.

The analysis of the piece reveals how Escalante Macaya uses numerous musical resources to effectively convey the programmatic elements. So many details are hidden between the notes that testify to the complexity and emotionalism of the work. This dissertation demystifies these details and exhibits the world-class compositional scene in Costa Rica. The analysis examines many details regarding the melodic and rhythmic development, harmonic treatment, and form structure, which were carefully shaped to serve the work's emotional elements.

This dissertation also serves as a performance guide with extensive theoretical and practical information that aims to facilitate the study of *Desasosiego* among bassoonists and to promote its programming. The theoretical information offers an insight into the work's musical nuances and the ideas behind Escalante Macaya's emotional purposes. The practical information offers suggestions on navigating the numerous technical challenges in the solo bassoon line, including ornaments and extended techniques. All this knowledge should be helpful for any musician looking to perform the work, and should motivate them to embrace the programmatic elements through the bassoon's virtuosic and lyrical writing.

Additionally, this document demonstrates the need to advocate for creating and programming Costa Rican repertoire for solo bassoon. Costa Rica has a long history of music-making and forming successful bassoonists, and it is imperative to continue the growth in original art music featuring the instrument. The current and next generations of Costa Rican bassoonists must foster the music of our country and work together with composers and musical institutions to advance our legacy.

This dissertation is another critical step in the current efforts to promulgate Costa Rican music in the 21st century and to increase the amount of music written for the bassoon. *Desasosiego* is an attestation to the first-class music-making that can result from artistic collaborations between Costa Rican composers, bassoonists, and musical institutions. There are challenges to these collaborations, but there is a strong will among colleagues to overcome them and build a future where the bassoon and Costa Rican music are more celebrated.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW WITH CARLOS ESCALANTE MACAYA

The interview with Carlos Escalante Macaya took place virtually in January 2025. Since there are no program notes or written information regarding the composer's ideas behind the work, his answers to these questions were essential in studying his composition *Desasosiego*. The interview occurred in English, as presented below.

QUESTION 1: What were the origins of composing your work *Desasosiego* for Solo Bassoon, Strings, and Percussion (2017)?

ANSWER 1: *Desasosiego* was a commissioned work by Costa Rican bassoonist Fernando Zúñiga Chanto in 2017. He was interested in a Solo piece for bassoon and small orchestra.

QUESTION 2: Where did the inspiration come from in writing this work? Are there any other musical works (including yours) that influenced your composing?

ANSWER 2: *Desasosiego* is a musical paraphrase of the feeling of despair that comes from enduring a long-term depression. On the other hand, some of the sections of the piece were inspired by several musical sketches I wrote for the play "Oresteia" by 5th Century BCE playwright Aeschylus.

QUESTION 3: You have written cello, clarinet, and piccolo/flute concertos. Why not name concerto this solo work for the bassoon? How did the previous concertos influence this work?

ANSWER 3: Rather than a concerto, *Desasosiego* is a rhapsody. It is a concert piece for soloist and orchestra that does not necessarily showcase the *soloist's virtuosi*ty.

QUESTION 4: Were there any non-musical works that influenced your composing? How did your work in theater and dance influence this work?

ANSWER 4: As I mentioned before, some of the sections of *Desasosiego* were developed from stage music, that I wrote for "Oresteia".

QUESTION 5: What challenges and opportunities did you experience in writing a solo work for the bassoon? How did you approach the instrument?

ANSWER 5: I always approach a solo concert piece working closely with the soloist from the very beginning of the process. Any piece for concerto or solo instrument that is not comfortable and idiomatic for the instrument will certainly be doomed to fall into oblivion with time.

QUESTION 6: What does 'Muerte de Clitemnestra' mean in the first movement's title, and how does it inform the musical content?

ANSWER 6: In the play "Oresteia," Clytemnestra is the wife of the King Agamemnon of Mycenae. The first section of *Desasosiego* is based on the music I wrote for the scene where Orestes kills his mother, Clytemnestra, as an act of vengeance for the murder of his father.

QUESTION 7: What does 'Geen woorde' mean in the second movement's title, and how does it inform the musical content?

ANSWER 7: "Geen woorde" is Afrikaans for "no words" I might have forgotten the relationship of this phrase with the music itself, but definitely relates to the dark mood of the piece.

QUESTION 8: What does 'abazi lutho' mean in the third movement's titl,e and how does it inform the musical content?

ANSWER 8: “abazi lutho” in isiZulu means “they know nothing”. *Desasosiego* (as a state of mind) appears when depression meets hopelessness. This feeling of despair is often made worse by the fact that other people don’t know what you are going through.

QUESTION 9: What does Roger Ballen’s photograph ‘Squawk’ mean on the score’s cover, and how does it inform the musical content?

ANSWER 9: I have always associated Roger Ballen’s work with depression, hopelessness, and despair. I think is pretty graphic in that sense.

QUESTION 10: What compositional techniques did you use in this work and why?

ANSWER 10: I always use a great variety of techniques, it would be almost impossible to enumerate every single one. These techniques come from contemporary music, Latin American music, or African music.

QUESTION 11: All of your biographies start with your time at the University of Costa Rica. How did you start in music? Did you learn any instruments or play in any groups?

ANSWER 11: My first encounter with a musical instrument was in my childhood when I discovered a piano at my maternal grandmother's house. Afterward, I had several private teachers, but I never took up the piano with the proper discipline. At school, my friends and I discovered Heavy metal, and we would get together to play pieces by Motorhead and AC/DC. Some of those friends from school are now professional musicians and we still make music together today. After leaving school, I participated in several rock bands: Armagedón, Avenida Nadie, Igni Ferroque, and the last group I played in when I was 29, was Marta Fonseca's band.

QUESTION 12: You studied in Costa Rica, Spain, and South Africa. Which composers and/or teachers influenced your musical language the most? What other music has shaped your compositional writing?

ANSWER 12: In South Africa, I studied with Peter Klatzow (1945-2021), an amazing composer. His music has always seemed to me extremely original and honest, I feel influenced by his music but also by many other kinds of music I have encountered through the years, like punk rock, heavy metal, *rock en español*, and African music.

QUESTION 13: You teach at the University of Costa Rica and the National Music Institute of Costa Rica. How has your work as a teacher influenced your compositional writing?

ANSWER 13: To be in the "Academic world" forces you to be informed and in constant research. To study different kinds of music from different historical periods inevitably ends up influencing the way you compose.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY WITH PROFESSIONAL COSTA RICAN BASSOONISTS

The survey was sent in Spanish and English translations are shown in the third appendix.

QUESTION 1: Have you performed solo repertoire written for bassoon by a Costa Rican composer? If so, what and when?

QUESTION 2: Check the works that you knew the existence of: *Semblanza* for Bassoon and String Orchestra - Benjamín Gutiérrez (2009), *Canto a Whitman* for Bassoon and Symphonic Band - Marvin Camacho (2011), *Episodios* for Bassoon and Orchestra - Vinicio Meza (2016), *Desasosiego* for Solo Bassoon, Strings, and Percussion - Carlos Escalante Macaya (2017), Triple Concerto for Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, and Strings - Sergio Delgado (2018), Concerto *Mamba-Mambo* for Bassoon and Strings - Fernando Zúñiga Chanto (2024).

QUESTION 3: Do you know of any other solo work for bassoon and large ensemble written by a Costa Rican composer? If so, what?

QUESTION 4: What reasons do you attribute to the lack of Costa Rican repertoire for solo bassoon? Please be as specific as possible.

QUESTION 5: What changes could promote the commission and programming of Costa Rican repertoire for solo bassoon? Please be as specific as possible.

QUESTION 6: What would motivate you to commission and perform Costa Rican repertoire for solo bassoon? Please be as specific as possible.

QUESTION 7: Which Costa Rican composer would you like to collaborate with in commissioning and premiering a work for solo bassoon and large ensemble?

APPENDIX C

ENCUESTA A FAGOTISTAS PROFESIONALES COSTARRICENSES

PREGUNTA 1: ¿Ha tocado alguna composición costarricense para fagot solista y orquesta/banda sinfónica? ¿Cuál composición? ¿Cuándo? ¿Con cuál agrupación?

PREGUNTA 2: Seleccione las composiciones que usted sabía de su existencia: Semblanza para fagot y orquesta de cuerdas - Benjamín Gutiérrez (2009), Canto a Whitman para fagot y banda sinfónica - Marvin Camacho (2011), Episodios para fagot y orquesta - Vinicio Meza (2016), Desasosiego para fagot solista, cuerdas y percusión - Carlos Escalante (2017), Triple Concerto para oboe, clarinete, fagot y orquesta de cuerdas - Sergio Delgado (2018), Concerto Mamba-Mambo para fagot y cuerdas - Fernando Zúñiga Chanto (2024).

PREGUNTA 3: ¿Usted conoce alguna otra composición costarricense para fagot solista y orquesta/banda sinfónica? ¿Cuál composición?

PREGUNTA 4: ¿Qué razones cree usted han contribuido a la falta de música costarricense para fagot solista y orquesta/banda sinfónica? Sea específico.

PREGUNTA 5: ¿Qué cambios podrían promover la creación y ejecución de música costarricense para fagot solista y orquesta/banda sinfónica? Sea específico.

PREGUNTA 6: ¿Qué lo motivaría a usted a tocar y comisionar música costarricense para fagot solista y orquesta/banda sinfónica? Sea específico.

PREGUNTA 7: ¿Con cuál compositor costarricense le gustaría colaborar en la creación y estreno de una composición para fagot solista y orquesta/banda sinfónica?