# COSTA RICAN COMPOSER CARLOS ESCALANTE MACAYA AND HIS CONCERTO FOR CLARINET AND STRINGS

**A Monograph**
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**by**
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this monograph is to promote Costa Rican academic music by focusing on Costa Rican composer Carlos Escalante Macaya and his Concerto for Clarinet and Strings (2012). I hope to contribute to the international view of Latin American composition and to promote Costa Rican artistic and cultural productions abroad with a study of the Concerto for Clarinet and Strings (Escalante's first venture into the concerto genre), examining in close detail its melodic, rhythmic and harmonic treatment as well as influences from different genres and styles. The monograph will also include a historical context of Costa Rican musical history, a brief discussion of previous important Costa Rican composers for the clarinet, a short analysis of the composer's own previous work for the instrument (Ricercare for Solo Clarinet) and performance notes. Also, in addition to the publication and audio/video recording of the clarinet concerto, this document will serve as a resource for clarinet soloists around the world.

Carlos Escalante Macaya (b. 1968) is widely recognized in Costa Rica as a successful composer. His works are currently performed year-round in diverse performance venues in the country. His compositions vary widely, including orchestral, choral, and chamber music works, as well as music for dance, theater, and film. He is associate composer for the national dance and theater companies, and also receives many other commissions. He has received important national and Latin American composition awards, but his music, as that of other Costa Rican composers, is yet to be discovered outside of Latin America.

Only one book, *Música académica costarricense: Del presente al pasado cercano* (2012), includes a commentary on Carlos Escalante Macaya. In it Costa Rican

musicologist Ekaterina Chatski briefly analyzes two of his most important compositions: *Los huesos tristes,* commissioned in 2006 for the Choreographer's Festival, and *Sinfonía Centenario* (1997), winner of the Latin American Composition Competition of the centenary of the National Theater of Costa Rica. This book also includes a short biography of the composer and a list numbering 81 of his compositions up to the year 2008.

The composer provided most materials necessary for my study, including multiple scores, inspirational visual materials, as well as a full interview (completed August 12, 2013) that will be included as an appendix. It is also important to mention that this concerto was written for me. The composer made significant effort to create a piece that would be, in his own words, a "perfectly fitted dress." My feedback ultimately made this piece what it is today, and my premiere of it on September 14, 2012, with the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica, was an absolute success. This piece was so well received by the Costa Rican public that it was included in the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica's latest CD recording of Costa Rican Music Composers. This recording is the first album of the National Symphony Orchestra to include a solo artist, so it is an honor for me to have been part of this wonderful project. Having been involved in all stages that brought this piece to life, I believe I am in the best position to present an analysis of the piece, to provide a historical background, and to offer performance recommendations for the future.

*In memory of my mother Floria Castrillo Brenes*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank first and foremost my advisor Dr. Cynthia Folio. I could not have asked for a better advisor. She was very patient with some of my confusing first drafts and always had the perfect solutions and suggestions that helped me turn this document into what it is today. Without her continued support and guidance this work would have never been completed. I thank her for taking the time to help me in this endeavor.

I would also like to thank Dr. Charles Abramovic, Dr. Emily Threinen and Dr. Stephen Willier for reviewing my work and offering such wonderful suggestions. I was very excited about their comments and their valuable feedback greatly influenced this final document.

I want to offer special thanks to Carlos Escalante Macaya for dedicating his first concerto to me and for supporting this entire project. I want to thank him for gracefully agreeing to an interview and for helping in its transcription and translation. His contributions were most valuable, providing a background into the own composer's creative process and ultimately making this document much more than a musical analysis. Thanks to him I feel this monograph offers a complete view of the composer and his work.

Finally, I would like to offer many thanks to all my friends and family. It wouldn't be possible to name them all because I am lucky to have many amazing people in my life, but they know who they are. Their unconditional and continued support and their encouraging words have helped me keep moving forward every day and have fueled my drive to complete this work. Infinite thanks for all the good energies!

Thank you!

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# CHAPTER 1
# INTRODUCTION

## Historical Background of Costa Rican Musical Life and Composition

In order to better understand where Carlos Escalante stands as a Costa Rican composer of the 21st century a brief background of Costa Rican musical history will be provided. Music is always a result of many influences, especially true in Costa Rica—a country that connects two halves of a continent and is continuously exposed to influences from the north, the south, the islands, and that was initially and drastically altered by the European conquistadors who imposed their culture on the Americas.

Music in Costa Rica has a long history, but what is understood as art music, music that is composed as a result of proper musical study and solely as an expression of art, is fairly new. Before the Spaniards conquered the Costa Rican territory in the 1500's there were only indigenous instruments and rudimentary music making. Both wind and percussion instruments were found, and some of their simple tunes were transcribed near the turn of the 20th century by Pedro J. Prado Gómez, Dr. Francis C. Nicholas (American explorer), Julio Fonseca and Ismael Cardona.[1] The cultural encounter with the Spaniards brought European culture to Costa Rica; their instruments and music slowly blended and became a dominating force.

From the 1500's to the 1800's Costa Rican music mostly served the needs of society. Even in the 1700's, when European composers were creating music for private

[1] Bernal Flores, *La Música en Costa Rica* (San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1978), 29.

[2] Ibid., 30.
[3] Carlos Araya Pochet, et al., *El Desarrollo Nacional en 150 Años de Vida Independiente* (San José, Costa Rica:

enjoyment, Costa Rican composers were mostly supplying music for the Catholic Church, military affairs, public town celebrations and other public activities. The slow musical progress during the time was partly a result of a lack of resources, a situation that did not attract many cultured immigrants who would have been able to enrich the musical life. Most cultured foreigners traveled to places such as Mexico, where the first music school of America was founded in 1524.[2] As Flores states, "What musical life could be expected of very impoverished communities, with very few inhabitants, in its majority illiterate and whose almost sole activity was agriculture?"[3] Music only fulfilled basic needs during those years and did not develop into any kind of art music composition.

***The 1800's: a Costa Rican "Renaissance"***

In the 19th century musical life in Costa Rica began to shift. A major influence was Costa Rica's nascent participation in the world economy through its coffee exports. As a consequence many families were enriched and the middle class thrived. Music began to emerge as a sought-after activity that provided many opportunities for social exchange, and kept young women occupied. By mid-century, instruments could be found in most households and many musical societies emerged. For the first time many amateurs could be found in the country and music's importance was felt across the main urban areas.

Professional musicians were very scarce at the time and even talented musicians had very few opportunities to pursue higher levels of musical education. There were no schools that could prepare them to become professional musicians. Some musicians were

[2] Ibid., 30.
[3] Carlos Araya Pochet, et al., *El Desarrollo Nacional en 150 Años de Vida Independiente* (San José, Costa Rica: Ciudad Universitaria Rodrigo Facio, 1971), 351.

able to travel abroad to further their studies, but few returned to contribute to the development of musical life in Costa Rica as they found better opportunities abroad—a situation that is still true today. Some very important composers of the time, referred by Matarrita as the first generation of Costa Rican composers, were Manuel María Gutiérrez (1829–1887), composer of the National Anthem of Costa Rica (1852); and Rafael Chaves Torres (1839–1907), composer of "El Duelo de la Patria" that was performed at important ceremonies in Europe. Their music and that of others at the time represent the very first Costa Rican efforts at creating a national musical identity.

The 1800's were truly a time of change. Besides the sudden changes generated by the new economy, other events aided in Costa Rica's musical development. In 1862 the first opera company visited the country.[4] Many more opera companies visited between 1867 and 1877 resulting in an increased interest in staged works, specially the Spanish *zarzuela*. In 1880 music became a permanent part of the public school curriculum, creating a new demand for music teachers. In 1891 the construction of the railroad to the Atlantic stimulated general progress in the country and made it easier to import musical instruments. One of the most influential events around mid-century was the arrival of foreign musicians who contributed to the country's musical development. The Spaniard José Campabadal, who arrived in 1876, was one of the most prominent. He composed many religious works as well as music for orchestra, choir, band, music for dance, *zarzuelas* and many hymns for the public schools. Mr. Campabadal and other foreign musicians helped mold the newer generations of composers by teaching privately, opening music schools, and creating performance venues.

[4] Flores, *La Música en Costa Rica*, 45.

With few exceptions compositions in the 1800's served social needs, just as in previous centuries, and were mostly spontaneous intuitive compositions with simple melodies accompanied by simple tonal harmonies; they were not based on any knowledge of the musical craft at large, and many are best described as folkloric in nature. The compositions of the first and second generations of composers were still very much tonal and stayed that way until the mid-1900's. Bernal Flores points out that music at the time was more of a simple creation, without much counterpoint; it sufficed that the melody was catchy and comprehensible, and the harmonization imitated their acquired European musical knowledge.[5] Musically Costa Rica was behind the rest of the world; there were no recordings or groups that could interpret advanced works from other places, and news travelled so slowly that it was impossible to maintain a musical production that could compete on a global scale.[6] It would take almost another century for all Costa Rican musicians to catch up with the rest of the western world.

### *The 1900's: Musical Transformation*

The first half of the 20th century was dominated by what Matarrita calls the second generation of composers. These composers, including Alejandro Monestel (1865–1950), Julio Fonseca (1885–1950), and Julio Mata (1899–1969), were all able to study abroad. They wrote the first art music compositions, yet they were not affected by the new radical tendencies of the early 20th century, composing mostly tonal works[7] and music for dance and stage. Bernal Flores summarizes the situation in the first half of the 20th century in this quote:

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[5] Ibid., 60.
[6] Ibid., 59.
[7] Maria Clara Vargas Cullell, "Un escenario caleidoscópico: música en Costa Rica (1940–2010)" in *Música académica costarricense: Del presente al pasado cercano* (San José: Ciudad Universitaria Rodrigo Facio, 2002), 7.

> There were very few (such as Julio Fonseca or Alejandro Monestel and some others) who had technical knowledge of some scope and amplitude; the majority ambulated dreamingly by the regions of primitive harmony, sometimes demonstrating a valuable musical sense and singular talent, but working with rudimentary technical tools. The fault of course was not theirs; it was the lack of a proper center of musical education.[8]

The inclusion of more serious classical music into society was a slow process that was promoted by the new political changes in the 1940's. In her book *Hurtándole Tiempo al Tiempo*, Tania Vicente explains that two major events in the 1940's started a 30-year process that slowly transformed music in Costa Rica from a casual social activity into a profession: the creation of the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica and the National Conservatory of Music—both subsidized in 1942 by the Costa Rican government. These important governmental creations not only allowed the development of music professors to fulfill the demand in public schools but also allowed specialized education, based on higher standards in learning and practice that led to public recognition of art music, and the consolidation of music as a profession in the 1970's.

In this period of radical transformation a new generation of composers took center stage. Matarrita identifies Carlos Enrique Vargas (1919–1998), who composed the first concerto and the first symphony ever written in Costa Rica,[9] Rocío Sanz (1934–1993), Benjamín Gutiérrez and Bernal Flores (both born in 1937), and Luis Diego Herra (b.1952) as the main exponents. This newer generation of composers finally introduced changes in the predominating musical language, breaking away from tradition by

[8] Flores, *La Música en Costa Rica*, 130. "Había muy pocos (como don Julio Fonseca o don Alejandro Monestel y algunos otros) que tenían conociminetos técnicos de algún alcance y amplitud; la mayoría vagaba soñadoramente por las regiones de una armonía primitiva, a veces demostrando un valioso sentido musical y singular talento, pero trabajando con herraminetas técnicas muy rudimentarias. La culpa claro está no era de ellos; se debía a la falta de un centro de educación musical adecuado." (translation mine)

[9] Manuel Matarrita, "An Analytical Study of Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 13 by Costa Rican Composer Carlos Enrique Vargas," (DMA diss., Louisiana State University, 2004), 8.

coursing into atonality and stretching tonality as others had done in Europe at the turn of the 20th century. These composers were the first to be truly in touch with the musical creation at large. They were all able to study abroad at prestigious institutions, learning thoroughly all current and past techniques, and their compositions were recognized in the country—receiving the Costa Rican National Music Award "Aquileo Echeverría" several times.[10]

Art music in Costa Rica made slow progress, in the sense that it took many years for composers to finally catch up with the current musical practices around the world. It was not until the mid-1900's that Costa Rican composers composed works that were congruous with their time. There are many beautiful works that resulted from this newer generation of composers as well as the previous, but what the following generation of composers brought, of which Escalante is a part, shed a totally new light on musical composition in Costa Rica, making it in some cases more national than ever before.

**Early Clarinet Repertoire in Costa Rica**

The clarinet was introduced in Costa Rica in or around 1845 solely as an instrument for the military bands; by 1849 the Military Band of San José had ten clarinetists in its lines.[11] In the mid-1800's, with the absence of orchestras, the military bands became a central part in the development of music in Costa Rica, and many musicians were created under their influence.[12]

[10] Vargas Cullell, "Un escenario caleidoscópico," 30.
[11] Maria Clara Vargas Cullell, *De las fanfarrias a las salas de concierto: música en Costa Rica* (1840-1940) (San José: National University of Costa Rica, 2004), 209.
[12] Flores, *La Música en Costa Rica*, 40.

The clarinet slowly became more popular towards the end of the 19th century, becoming part of municipal philharmonies and "salon" orchestras, as well as more classically oriented philharmonies. It was also included in small religious and chamber ensembles. In 1942 the clarinet became a permanent member of the National Symphony Orchestra. The clarinet continues to be of utmost importance in the National Symphony Orchestra and at the National Bands, former military bands.

Repertoire written specifically for clarinet did not appear until the mid-20th century. The first major pieces composed for the instrument were Benjamín Gutiérrez's Concerto for A Clarinet and Orchestra and his Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, both composed in 1959. The concerto was ironically not premiered in Costa Rica but in the United States of America. Benjamín Gutiérrez studied at the New England Conservatory in Boston when he composed these and other important pieces; therefore, the premiere took place in the Hubbard Auditorium of the Manhattan School of Music with Sherman Friedland as clarinet soloist on May 7, 1960.[13] Gutiérrez's clarinet concerto incorporates a Neo-Romantic character in the first movement, dodecaphonic sonorities inspired by Alban Berg's approach to writing twelve-tone music in the second, and a discrete tribute to Bach in the third.[14] The concerto was recently brought back to life by Costa Rican clarinetist Luis Adolfo Víquez Córdoba and the Municipal Orchestra of Heredia, whose current efforts to promote Latin American repertoire are praiseworthy.

Bernal Flores Zeller, composer, musicologist and educator, wrote the second major Costa Rican clarinet concerto. This was his *Pentatonic Concerto for Clarinet and*

[13] Luis Víquez, "The Clarinet Concerto by Costa Rican Composer Benjamín Gutiérrez," *Journal of the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles* 20 (2013): 51.
[14] Ibid., 51–52.

*Orchestra* performed for the first time by the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica on October 22, 1968.[15] Flores completed all his academic degrees from the Eastman School of Music, concluding with a D.M.A. in 1964. The New Mexico Orchestra recorded his clarinet concerto, and no further performances are known. It is a beautiful pentatonic-inspired concerto full of virtuoso passages for the clarinet.

Daube Barquero (b. 1911–unknown), first principal clarinetist of the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica[16] and conductor of the National Band of Cartago,[17] wrote another early clarinet concerto. He composed a Concerto for Clarinet and Band, "24 de Mayo," in 1964. The concerto was premiered during the 1964 festivities in San José's central park by clarinetist Victor Hugo Jarquín. This piece has long been forgotten and no performances are registered after the October 1965 performance by clarinetist Rodrigo Jimenez and the National Band of San José.[18] There is some current interest by the members of the Cartago National Band to perform it. Barquero's concerto is a classically inspired set of variations on a given theme; it is tonal, uses traditional variation form, and presents many triad figurations as found in Weber's clarinet concertos, or earlier clarinet concertos. Barquero's concerto is simpler than the concertos by Gutiérrez and Flores, which display a full knowledge of musical techniques of the time.

Later compositions for clarinet include Luis Diego Herra's Song for Clarinet and Orchestra (1974) and *Agua de mil reflejos* (1995) for solo clarinet; Fulvio Villalobos Sandobal's *Sueños: Romanza para clarinete en Sib* (1995); Vinicio Meza's many

[15] F.G., "Bernal Flores Zeller en el Teatro Nacional," *La Nacion* [San José, Costa Rica] October 21, 1968, 38.
[16] Vargas Cullell, *De las fanfarrias a las salas de concierto*, 288.
[17] Daube Barquero, *Concerto for Clarinet and Band: 24 de Mayo* (Cartago, Costa Rica, 1964) (unpublished score).
[18] Ibid.

compositions including clarinet such as *Dos Melodias para Clarinete Solo* (1995); William Porras's *Vals de la mariposa* for clarinet and piano; Allen Torres's Invention for clarinet and marimba (1999); Luciano Eliecer Brenes Aguilar's *Eunice Sonata* for Clarinet and Piano (2010); and Victor Hugo Berrocal's *El Chico del Guayabal* for C clarinet and band (2010). Not many other pieces have been composed featuring the clarinet in the past, and Carlos Escalantes Macaya's Clarinet Concerto represents the third main concerto ever written for clarinet and orchestra by a Costa Rican composer.

Escalante's concerto is different from the previous two Costa Rican concertos for clarinet and orchestra composed by Benjamín Gutiérrez and Bernal Flores. Gutiérrez and Flores both wrote concertos that followed the 20th-century spirit of experimentation, utilizing contemporary resources and ideas (dodecaphonism and pentatonic scales). Escalante's concerto goes in new directions, as a result of his creative inspiration, his excellent training coming from his Costa Rican professors and further studies and workshops completed abroad.

**Carlos Escalante Macaya and His Music**

Carlos Escalante Macaya (b. 1968) began his musical studies at the University of Costa Rica under the guidance of Luis Diego Herra, Benjamín Gutiérrez and Bernal Flores—considered by Cullell as the most influential composers of their generation,[19] the first truly knowledgeable about current and past musical techniques. There he obtained a Bachelor of Music degree with emphasis in composition in 1995. In 2002 he obtained a Master of Music degree in composition at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

[19] Maria Clara Vargas Cullell, "Un escenario caleidoscópico," 31.

There he studied with Peter Klatzow and Henryk Hofmeyr. He also participated in advanced composition workshops with Franco Donatoni and Adolfo Núñez.

Escalante has won many prizes for his works in Costa Rica and abroad. In 2001 he was awarded the Peter Klatzow Composition Prize (South Africa). He was chosen composer of the year in 2000 in the category of music for theater by the "Asociación de Compositores y Autores Musicales de Costa Rica (ACAM)." In 1997 he won first prize in the Latin American Composition Competition sponsored by the National Theater of Costa Rica, on behalf of its 100-year celebration. In 1992 he won second place on the Permanent Central American Competition September 15th in Guatemala.

Escalante has been associate composer for the National Dance Lyric Company and the National Theater Company for several years. He is actively engaged composing for these groups, as well as teaching at the University of Costa Rica and the National Institute of Music. His compositions also include chamber music, music for orchestra, piano, choir, video and film. Some of his works have been recorded in seven nationally produced albums.

In the book *Compositores Costarricenses Contemporáneos* Cullell points out how most contemporary Costa Rican composers have abandoned the rigidity of the modernist tendencies and are deepening into a more free style that combines elements from other musical traditions as well as integrates interdisciplinary elements.[20] This is best summarized by Cullell in her statement: "probably what most contemporary Costa Rican composers agree on is in their interest in integrating elements from different times,

[20] Maria Clara Vargas Cullell, "Un escenario caleidoscópico," 46.

cultures or types of music."[21] Escalante's music is without a doubt a great example of this tendency. He includes a wide array of styles that goes beyond the teachings of his professors, all of these are found in his Concerto for Clarinet and Strings.

[21] Ibid. "Pero quizás en lo que más compositores coinciden es en su interés por integrar elementos de diversas épocas, culturas o tipos de música." (translation mine)

# CHAPTER 2
# CARLOS ESCALANTE MACAYA'S CLARINET CONCERTO

## Relevance in Costa Rica, Latin America & the World

Carlos Escalante Macaya's Clarinet Concerto represents an important addition to the clarinet repertoire. At a global level Escalante's concerto was acknowledged by *The Clarinet Magazine*—the international clarinet journal—in their June 2012 submission,[22] making it known to clarinetists all over the world.

As the third major concerto for clarinet and orchestra ever written in Costa Rica it also represents an important contribution to the Latin American repertoire for clarinet. The clarinet continues to grow in popularity in Latin America and composers are writing new and exciting concertos that take advantage of the instrument's wide range and versatility. Many of these new concertos combine western compositional techniques with some of the traditional and new popular music. One example from Latin America is the *Concerto Silvestre for Bass Clarinet* by Peruvian composer Rafael Junchaya (premiered in Spain in 2009 and performed over 18 times in Latin America and Europe), whose third movement incorporates some unexpected reggaeton.[23]Another example is Brazilian composer Francisco Mignone's *Concertino* (2004), whose third movement shows clear influences from the popular *choros*[24] without being one. These new concertos integrate many different influences, especially popular and traditional styles from their country of origin, giving them a fresh new sound. Escalante's Clarinet Concerto stands out in this

[22] Ricardo Dourado Freire, "News from South America," *The Clarinet Magazine* 39, no. 3 (June, 2012): 87.
[23] Reggaeton is a Latin American musical genre that emerged in the 90s. It combines Jamaican dance music with other Latin styles and hip-hop. Its dance and lyrics are often very sexual.
[24] Choro or chorihno is a type of traditional Brazilian popular music that arouse in the 19th century. Usually fast, virtuosic and improvisatorial with subtle modulations and full of syncopation.

category as the only concerto for clarinet and orchestra from Costa Rica to follow this general tendency. This concerto's relevance in Latin America is also amplified by the fact that clarinetists in Latin America have contacted the composer seeking to perform the concerto.

Escalante's concerto has already travelled outside of Latin America. Its American premiere was March 15, 2014 with the American Philharmonic Sonoma County in California, today named Sonoma County Philharmonic, and myself under the direction of Norman Gamboa. The concerto was very well received. Terry McNeill described the evening stating: "This showy piece was an APSC triumph, and the audience of 400 was loudly appreciative."[25] Also, the concerto's recording with the National Symphony of Costa Rica will soon be available for purchase from iTunes and CdBaby giving it possibilities to travel even further.

It is likely that the Escalante clarinet concerto will become part of the standard repertoire for Costa Rican clarinetists. The previous two existing concertos in the country were written 50 years ago and are recently being rediscovered. This makes this concerto stand out as the first 21st-century concerto in the country to stretch the technical and lyrical possibilities of the clarinet in a work permeated by Latin American and world sounds that are characteristic of our contemporary globalized societies.

**Inspiration and Precursor: Ricercare for Solo Clarinet**

Carlos Escalante Macaya's concerto was inspired by his first interactions with me, a Costa Rican clarinetist (Ana Catalina Ramírez Castrillo). Our relationship began in

[25] Terry McNeill, "New-World Orchestral Mastery," *Classical Sonoma: Reporting on classical music across the North Bay*, March 15, 2014, accessed May 1, 2014, http://classicalsonoma.org/reviews/?reviewid=454&genreid.

2009, when in my constant search for new Latin American repertoire I inquired if he had any music for solo clarinet. He replied he had none but that he could write something. Months later he surprised me with a piece: Ricercare for Solo Clarinet (2011). Together we revised the piece, which I proceeded to learn, perform and record. Escalante was very pleased with my performance of the Ricercare, and a great working relationship was established.

The Ricercare for Solo Clarinet (Felliniana No. 2) worked as an introduction to the possibilities of the clarinet, which expanded on Escalante's ideas of what could be done with the instrument. When Escalante began composing this piece I asked him to please write exactly what he wanted without worrying much if it was possible to play or not. I wanted him to be free to create, and not worry about technical aspects; we could worry about those later. On January 24, 2011 he sent me the following message:

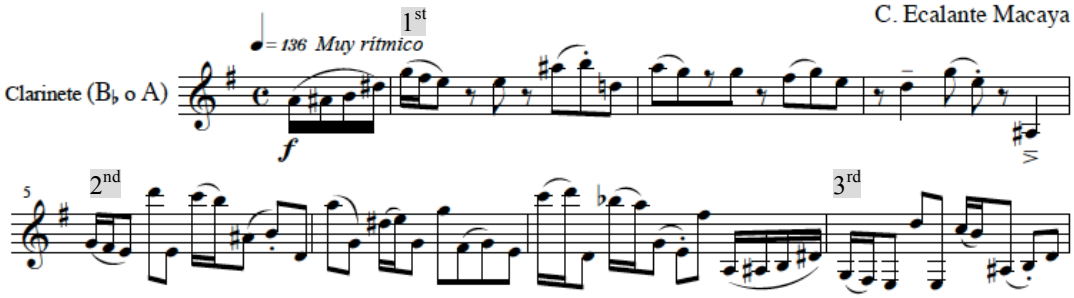
> I revised the piece for solo clarinet coming back from El Salvador, and this time I did it with no fears and without inhibitions, for which now it probably does have very uncomfortable things; but in any case it is about revising it together so that it ends as a well-fitted dress for you…[26]

The early version of the piece did have a few inconvenient passages that we changed, but to Escalante's surprise many of his original passages that he thought were not possible could be retained. I feel working together in this manner helped create a better piece: a piece that is both faithful to the composer's wishes and challenging and fun to play for the clarinetist.

[26] Carlos Escalante, e-mail message to author, January 24, 2011. "Revisé la pieza para Clarinete solo al volver de El Salvador, y esta vez lo hice sin miedos y sin inhibiciones, por lo que ahora sí debe de tener cosas super incómodas; pero se trata en todo caso que la revisemos juntos para que quede a la medida tuya (como si fuera un buen vestuario)..." (Translation mine)

The Ricercare is a lively five-minute piece in ABA form. It is full of wide leaps that exploit the full register of the instrument, and it explores the possibility of creating simultaneous voices, following the 17th-century meaning of *ricercare.* It creates a three-voice compound melody, with imitative counterpoint; the figuration gives the illusion that it is a three-voice piece. The second "voice" is introduced at m. 5 and the third at m. 8 (Example 1). This piece is a great example of composition inspired on traditional forms and genres.

**Example 1: Ricercare (Three-voice imitative counterpoint)**




One of the features taken from the Ricercare that was further explored by Escalante in his concerto for clarinet was the use of wide leaps. The Ricercare is permeated with fast wide leaps. Just the first few bars show a wide array of leaps including a two-octave leap in m. 7. In the concerto he goes beyond two octaves including a leap of two and a half octaves, and increases the difficulty of the leaps by making them legato in the second movement.

The idea to compose a concerto had been on Escalante's mind for some time, but the instrument to use kept eluding him. He wanted to compose a concerto for someone who was making a career as a soloist and could add it to his/her solo repertoire, but not

someone who was so famous as to have many other concertos written for them.[27] After our experience working on the Ricercare (which establish a successful working relationship between composer and performer and helped expand on the composer's knowledge of the clarinet's capabilities) Escalante found the right match and decided to write for the clarinet creating his first concerto ever: Concerto for Clarinet and Strings (2012).

## Concerto General Features

### *Tonal Style*

The concerto is tonal. Tonality is even reflected at a larger scale. The structure of keys for each movement outline a B minor triad—the first movement in B minor, the second in F# minor and the third in D minor. Furthermore, the other key areas in the movements outline the same chord: C major. The first movement goes through E minor in the second tonal area, and C minor for most of the development. The second movement goes through E and G minor and the last movement through a cycle of fifths in the B section, going from D minor to G minor to C minor. This is an interesting feature that gives this concerto a tonal unity that is not clearly or readily heard.

The concerto's harmony is straightforward, without many complex chords. What makes its harmony interesting is the mix of traditional harmony, with some modal melodies in the clarinet, and the use of $9^{th}$, $11^{th}$, and $13^{th}$ chords, as well as jazz and bluesy chords. Harmonies are many times sustained by use of ostinatos and pedal points over which different lines are presented. The most interesting harmonies are found in the transitions, which will be closely examined.

[27] Carlos Escalante, interview by author, San José, Costa Rica, August 12, 2013.

### *Traditional Forms*

The concerto uses traditional forms. The first movement is a modified sonata-allegro form (Table 1). It has a clear recapitulation but its development doesn't include common expectations such as many keys and alteration or juxtaposition of themes. The second movement is a ternary form [ABA´-Cadenza-Codetta (Table 2)] with elements of sonata-allegro form. The third movement is an alteration of Sonata-Rondo with Trio (Table 3). The composer explains in his concert notes that this last movement is inspired by Fellini's films, in which the circus element, with its capacity to amaze and its unexpected events, gave the Italian director a formal framework. Utilizing this framework in this concerto made it possible to integrate the virtuosic, lyric, mysterious, and give unity to the most disparate elements.[28]

### *Blending of Styles*

The concerto is characterized by clear sections, which contain influences from different times and places, creating a unique style. Roughly it can be characterized as a blend of Latin American music and western classical music. Some elements that make up Escalante's style found in the concerto include:

- melodic and rhythmic motives as important building blocks
- sharp contrasts between rhythmically-active accompaniment and extended lyrical lines
- minimalistic techniques

[28] Carlos Escalante, "Concerto for Clarinet and Strings," in National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica VIII Concert Program, San José, Costa Rica, 2012.

- prolongation of harmonies through ostinatos and pedal points over which different lines are presented
- 4-part chorale textures at end of movements or sections (especially the 1st mvt.)
- frequent syncopation and anacrusis (e.g. Latin American rhythms)
- frequent root movement and melodic motion by 4th/5th
- chromatic and modal melodic lines

***Other Important Characteristics***

The piano plays a prominent role in this concerto. Escalante himself considers it the second most important instrument in the work. The piano serves several functions. In the background it works as a rhythm section, accompanying and maintaining the underlying motion. In the foreground it opens and closes sections, as in the beginning of the second movement, where it is completely alone. The piano has its own solos and serves as connective tissue between the clarinet and the orchestra keeping everything together; it also briefly joins the clarinet in its cadenzas in the first and second movements.

Another interesting feature in the concerto is the clarinet cadenzas. Every movement has one or more cadenzas. Movements I and III have the first cadenza immediately after the first section, and a shorter solo interjection. Movement II has one before the last section. The cadenzas in the first two movements are present at transitional points in the composition, leading into the next section. The cadenza in the third movement opens the development.

# CHAPTER 3
# MOVEMENT 1, "MAMIHLAPINATAPAI"

## The Title and its Applied Meaning

### *Etymology of "Mamihlapinatapi"*

The first movement is titled Mamihlapinatapai, from the Chilean indigenous Yaghan language. It was a word the composer came across on the Internet. The yaghan—Yagán, Jargan, Iakan or Yámana (meaning human being)—language was spoken on the south coast of Tierra de Fuego, Chile, and in the Hoste, Navarino, Picton and Wollaston islands.[29] It is a melodious type of Indian language—rich, precise, and full of meaning.[30] Martin Gusinde states that for the time being one must regard Yamana as an isolated language, which is not even closely related to neighboring Selk'nam and Halakwulup.[31]

Mamihlapinitapai is listed as the most succinct word in the *Guinness Book of World Records* (1994)[32] and it is also considered one of the hardest words to translate. Mamihapinatapai is most commonly defined as unspoken and meaningful silences, conversations that happen without words between two people, and it allegedly refers to "a look shared by two people, each wishing that the other will offer something that they both desire but are unwilling to suggest or offer themselves."[33] Its complex meaning is

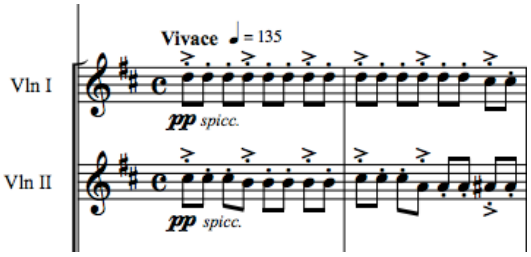
[29] Perla Golbert de Goodbar, "Hacia una morfología verbal del Yagán," *International Journal of American Linguistics* 51, no. 4 (October, 1985): 421, accessed March 18, 2014, *JSTOR*.
[30] Martin Gusinde, *The Yamana: The Life and Thought of the Water Nomads of Cape Horn*, translated from German by Frieda Schütze (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1961), 1403.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Peter Matthews, and Norris McWhirter, *Guinness Book of Records 1994* (London: Guinness Press, 1993), 392.
[33] "Mamihlapinatapai." *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia.* Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., last modified March 19, 2014. accessed March 20, 2014 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamihlapinatapai > (source provided by Carlos Escalante).

reflected in the composition in that the clarinet and the orchestra rarely share the same material, creating a conversation between the parts.

***Melody as Opposing Thoughts***

Following the implications of its title, this movement is characterized by the alternation of ideas between the clarinet and the orchestra, which are brought together by the piano and the rhythmic ostinatos in the lower strings. For Escalante this movement is a dialogue between the clarinet and the orchestra, but not any kind of dialogue. It is the kind of dialogue where the parts are getting to talk to each other for the first time; "it is as if the clarinetist would have brought his/her ideas and the orchestra its ideas and they have to make a movement together."[34] Their exchange of ideas is set over the recurring main motive, Motive a (Example 2), maintained later on mainly by the lower strings and the piano in rhythmic ostinatos. In order to fully understand the whole structure this main motive will be examined.

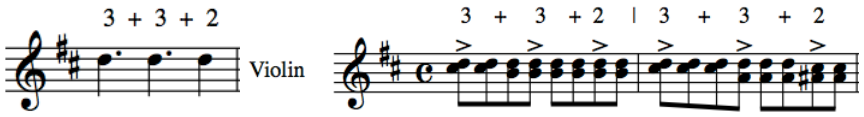
**Example 2: Motive a (1st movement's main motive)**




[34] Carlos Escalante, interview by author, San José, Costa Rica, August 12, 2013. "como que si el clarinetista hubiera llevado sus ideas y la orquesta las suyas y tienen que hacer un movimiento juntos." (translation mine)

Motive a opens the first movement. This eighth-note pulsation, stated by the violins, underlies with its accents a Cuban *tresillo*. *Tresillo* means "triplet," made up of three elements. A Cuban *tresillo* is basically a rhythmic structure of 3+3+2 (Example 3). Example 3 also illustrates how the 3+3+2 of the Cuban *tresillo* is brought out by the accents in the violins. This rhythm is the basic building block of the entire movement (see section 3 in this Chapter on Motivic Transformation), and sets the mood as if emulating an agitated heartbeat over which the conversation between the parts takes place.

**Example 3: Cuban *tresillo* and eighth notes underlying the Cuban *tresillo***

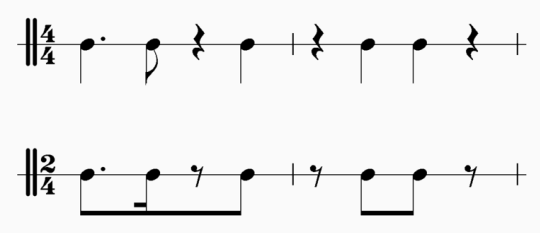



The Cuban *tresillo* figure is found in virtually all of the Caribbean, as well as in other parts of Latin America influenced by African heritage. It is centuries old, with roots in the music of Congo cultures and those of the Middle East.[35] "In the bass this figure was commonplace in Cuba before it was commonplace in the United States. It is the figure that you hear in some styles of boogie-woogie, in countless rhythm and blues records, and, of course, as a fundamental part of the rock-and-roll feel."[36] The Cuban *tresillo* can also be recognized in contemporary salsa music, being the first part of 3-2

[35] Robin Moore, *Musics of Latin America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 2012), 212.
[36] Ned Sublette, *Cuba and its Music: from the First Drums to the Mambo* (Chicago, Illinois: Chicago Review Press, 2004), 134.

Son Clave (Example 4), one version of the Cuban Son Clave used by *rumberos* in Havana and heard all over the world.

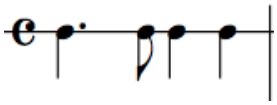
**Example 4: 3-2 Son Clave**



The Cuban *tresillo* evolved from the tango or habanera rhythm (Example 5), which was the rhythm added to *contradanza* by black musicians in Cuba.[37] This rhythm is found accompanying the first *contradanzas* published in Havana in 1803, and also in *guarachas* long before that.[38] The Cuban *tresillo* was the result of tying the second note of the habanera rhythm to the third. This *tresillo* rhythm is without a doubt the driving force of the whole movement, but there are a couple instances where the rhythm goes back to its original tango precursor. On a historical note, Argentinian tango—the one genre mostly associated with tango rhythm—was the most popular music heard in Costa Rica between 1932 and 1949.[39]

[37] Ibid,. 133.
[38] Alejo Carpentier, *Music in Cuba* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 98.
[39] Juan José Marín Hernández, *Melodías de Perversión y Subversión: La Música Popular en Costa Rica* 1932-1960 (San José, Costa Rica: Editorial Librería Alma Máter, 2009), 65.

**Example 5: Tango or Habanera Rhythm (traditionally interpreted in cut time)**



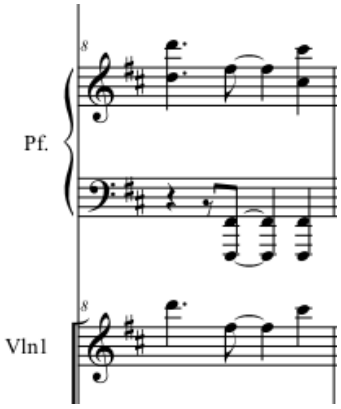
It is interesting to think that Latin American popular music was always completely excluded from art music compositions in Costa Rica. Historically, both styles were widely separated. Art music was strongly supported for many years by the government because the elite believed it would help civilize the rest of society.[40] Meanwhile, popular music was viewed as a corrupting force encouraging bad behavior in youngsters, especially because it presented a model of life that did not share their official values.[41] It was until the end of the 20th century that both worlds began to fuse, to create what I believe to be a more realistic representation of the music of Costa Rica—music that is a result of the blending of all prevailing styles that make up the social standard of the country. The Escalante Clarinet Concerto is a perfect example of this newer tendency in Latin America that does not discriminate against any one style but embraces all in order to create new expressive music.

Understanding the driving underlying *tresillo* rhythm, leads finally to the discussion of melody as opposing thoughts. This "silent" conversation between the parts begins with the orchestra's statement (mm. 7–11). After a six-measure introduction of Motive a, the orchestra clarifies the Cuban *tresillo* in the piano and first violins by omitting the extra embellishing eighth notes in the pattern (Example 6). The clarified

[40] Ibid., 27.
[41] Ibid., 46.

*tresillo* in the piano and violin becomes a returning theme that alternates with the clarinet during the first theme.

**Example 6: Motive a1 (clarified Cuban *tresillo*)**

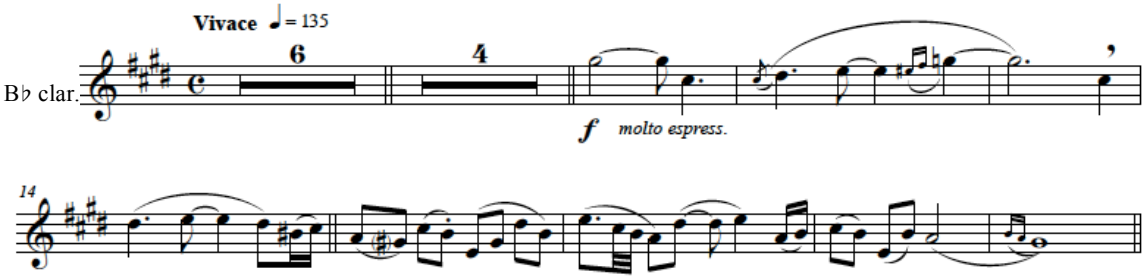



After the orchestral ritornello the clarinet responds subtly (m. 11), with a lyrical new theme that starts by disrupting the established *tresillo* rhythm with a half note tied to an eighth note followed by a dotted-quarter note (Example 7), and disrupting the established B minor harmony with its Aeolian flavor. The composer wanted this movement to start this way, subtly, because he was writing it for a woman, and for it to continue developing.[42] This was exactly what he accomplished. After its subtle entrance the clarinet continues to develop its theme, incorporating sharp accents (some with flutter tongue for added emphasis). Later clarinet entrances incorporate anacruses, making its entrances more present, go into higher registers, break the melody with wider leaps, increase syncopation and lead into more exciting fast passages. Every new developed statement of the clarinet in the first 43 measures is answered by the orchestra's unchanged ritornello that continues to support the Cuban *tresillo* rhythm, giving the

[42] Carlos Escalante, interview by author, San José, Costa Rica, August 12, 2013.

listener a sense of two clear perspectives going back and forth: a sense of conversation between two parts.

**Example 7: Clarinet Opening Entrance (Theme 1a)**

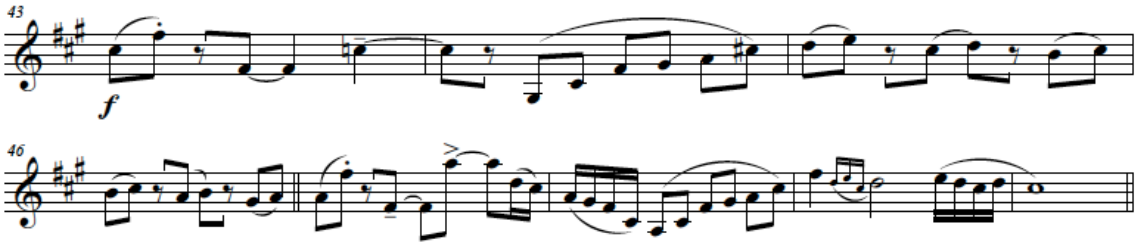



The clarinet melody has a sense of freedom and jazz-like qualities at times, but it does stay rhythmically grounded, emphasizing the first beat of measures most of the movement. The first entrance is fairly contained, staying in the middle of the clarinet register and sliding around with appoggiaturas in the first two measures—as if trying to test the waters before making a clearer statement at m. 14 (Example 7).

The conversation between the clarinet and the orchestra is clearly defined throughout the first 43 measures, and at m. 43 (the beginning of Theme 2a) the clarinet starts to takes over. Theme 2a (Example 8) is more bouncy and playful than before, and underlines the Cuban *tresillo*. The orchestra supports the new theme with a mix of tango and *tresillo* rhythm. The clarinet seems to be agreeing with the orchestra, but at m. 47 it digresses and the orchestra begins a *crescendo* two measures later. This leads to a *fortissimo* statement of Motive a in the orchestra (m. 50), after which the clarinet breaks away in a short solo of falling fourths (m. 51). The clarinet continues at m. 54 with a

version of Theme 2 (Theme 2b) and finishes the section with the Theme 1b in E minor, leading right into a full cadenza, as if trying to prove its point with a monologue.

**Example 8: Theme 2a (B♭ clarinet)**




After the clarinet cadenza the clarinet states Theme 2a (m. 98) one more time. At m. 111 the clarinet and the orchestra engage in playful imitative counterpoint and a new theme emerges at m. 137. At that point the conflict between the parts seems to be resolving but the clarinet picks up Theme 2b (m. 151) at a *forte* dynamic out of the *piano* strings, once again breaking away. The orchestra answers at m. 159 and the clarinet continues to elaborate on Theme 2b from m.169 for twenty measures.

Measure 196 brings back the original opening conflict between the clarinet and the orchestra, after much exchange of material between the parts. This time the clarinet starts even more subtly, one dynamic less, and quickly moves to louder dynamics and higher registers than before; meanwhile the orchestra insists on its Cuban *tresillo*.

## Analysis of Form

### *Aspects of Sonata Form*

Mamihlapinatapai exhibits a modified sonata-allegro form, outlined in Table 1. Several aspects differ from the typical sonata form.

**Table 1: Outline of the Form of Movement I, Mamihlapinatapai (Modified Sonata-Allegro Form)**

| M. #s | Large Parts | Smaller Parts | Themes | Keys/Roman Numerals |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Intro | Intro | Intro | B m |
| 7 | | | String Ritornello | B m |
| 11 | Exposition | First Tonal Area (FTA) | Theme 1a | B m |
| 19 | | | String Ritornello | B m |
| 24 | | | Theme 1b (1a varied and extended) | B m |
| 38 | | | String Ritornello/Transition | B m → V9/E m |
| 43 | | Second Tonal Area (STA) | Theme 2a | E m |
| 51 | | | Short clarinet cadenza—Interjection/falling 4ths | E m |
| 54 | | | Theme 2b | E m |
| 62 | | | Theme 1b | E m → V7/E m |
| 70 | | | Transition | E m: ii9 – Neap9 |
| 74 | | | Clarinet cadenza: Transition to Development | V pedal of Cm, esp. using G-A♭-G motive |
| 103 | Development | Part I | Theme 2a | C m |
| 111 | | Part II | Imitation and Counterpoint between clarinet and orchestra | C m |
| 129 | | | Transition | C m: Bass ostinato |
| 137 | | Part III | New Theme | Bass ostinato continued |
| 151 | | Part IV | Theme 2b | C m with G ped. |
| 159 | | | Orchestra tutti | C m |
| 169 | | | Theme 2b varied | C m |
| 180 | | | Theme 2b varied | C m with G ped. |
| 190 | | | Retransition | C m → V7/DM |
| 196 | Recapitulation | Intro | Intro | B m |
| 206 | | First Tonal Area | Theme 1a | B m |
| 220 | | | Orchestra transition | B m |
| 225 | | Second Tonal Area | New Theme restatement | B m |
| 239 | | | Transition into *attacca* second movement | B m → iv9/F# m |

The first interesting difference in the form is the appearance of a string ritornello. The First Tonal Area (FTA) of the exposition (mm. 7–43), dominated by the key of B minor, exhibits an alternation between this ritornello and the clarinet themes 1a and 1b. This alternation is reminiscent of a rondo's alternating nature (ABACA).

Another interesting difference is found in the Second Tonal Area (STA) mm. 43–74, an area dominated by E minor. Here the section is interrupted by a solo clarinet interjection of falling fourths (mm. 51–54). It separates themes 2a and 2b, interrupting the flow of the second thematic area. Interruptions like this are usually implemented at the end of a major section and not in the middle of one.

One major difference from sonata form is that the development is not typical. It does not present common expectations such as many different keys, or development of thematic material. The whole development is set to C minor, making it harmonically stable. The themes are restated instead of developed. Escalante restates themes 2a and 2b and also introduces a new theme at m. 137.

The development does share a few similarities with traditional sonata form developments. It does contain an imitative section (mm. 111–137), which is commonly found in sonata form, and most of its thematic material is directly taken from the exposition. Part 1 of the development begins with a re-statement of theme 2a, part 2 imitative section is also based on the same theme, and themes 2a and 2b are restated in varied forms in the final part 4.

The recapitulation, shorter in length than the exposition, brings back elements from both the exposition and the development. It restates themes 1a and 1b, and makes

reference to the new theme introduced in the development as well as other sections in the piece. The recapitulation maintains everything in the tonic key (B minor), following sonata form conventions.

***Transitions***

The transitions in this movement are the most interesting sections harmonically. The first transition is at m. 70. In this transition Escalante introduces for the first time a contrasting harmonic color: $ii^9$ chord followed by a Neapolitan 9. These chords lead the way into the clarinet cadenza (m. 74).

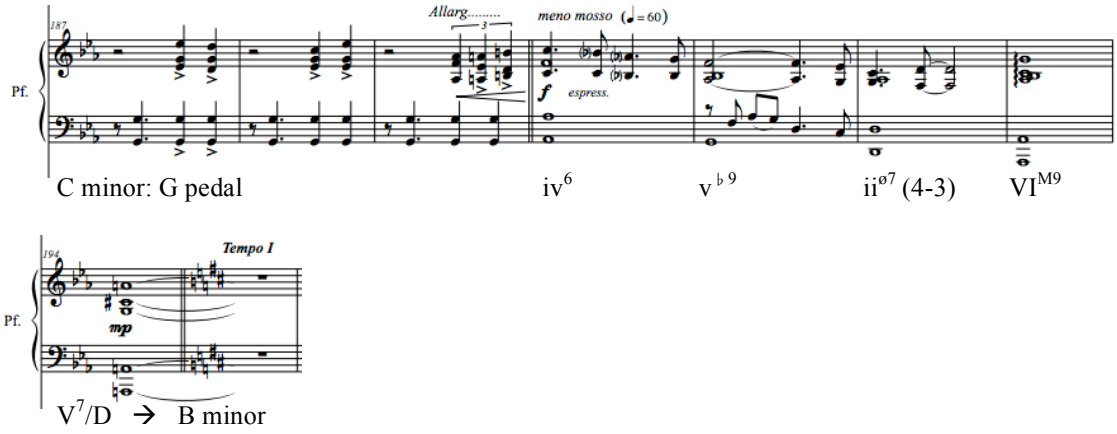
The first movement cadenza is the most substantial of the cadenzas in the concerto. It functions as an extended transition between the exposition and the development, prolonging the dominant of C minor. This cadenza is based on an upper neighbor motive (G-A♭-G). This motive is embellished by *pianissimo* multiphonics in the clarinet, which require absolute control of the airflow and embouchure. This cadenza also explores the entire range of the clarinet as well as its dynamic possibilities creating a wide variety of colors and effects.

The most interesting transitions are the retransition and the transition into the second movement. They share much in common. In both transitions Escalante incorporates $9^{th}$ chords, coming more out of the jazz tradition, and they both share very similar chord progressions.

The retransition (Example 9) is stated by the piano alone. In the key of C minor it works its way through $iv^6$ – $v^{\flat 9}$ – $ii^{\varnothing 7}$ (4-3) – $VI^{M9}$ culminating in a dominant of D (m.

194), suggesting that the recapitulation will be in that key (D), but the recapitulation makes a surprising turn to B minor—the same as the opening of the Exposition.

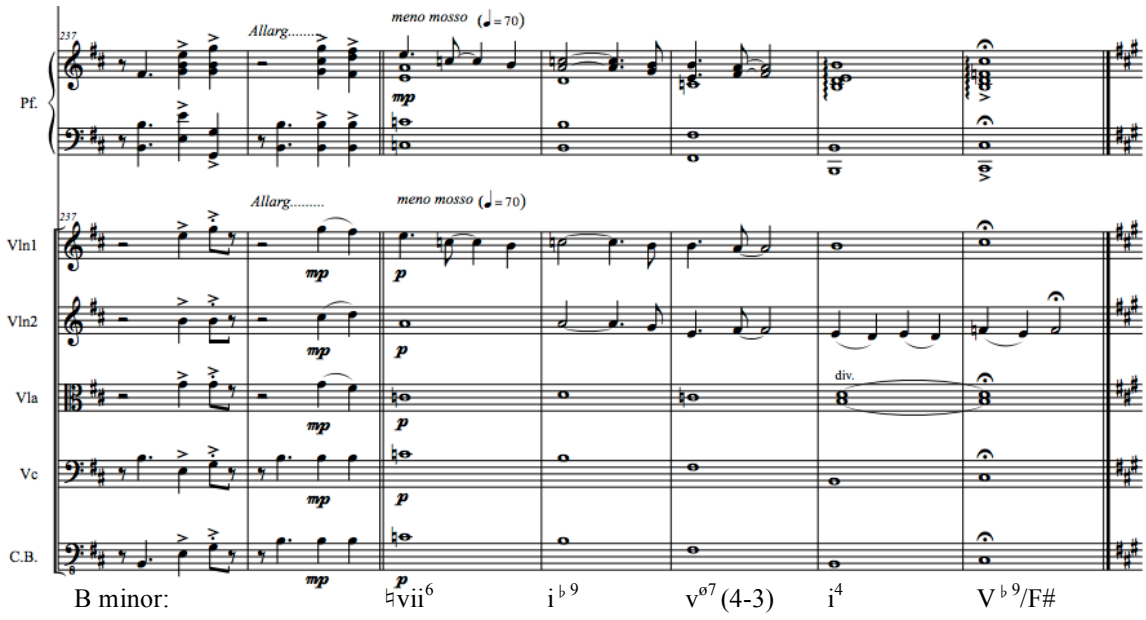
**Example 9: Mamihlapinatapai, Retransition**




Finally the transition into the second movement (Example 10) is very similar to the retransition; it starts with the same first three chord qualities. In B minor it goes through ♮vii$^{6}$ – i$^{♭9}$ – v$^{ø7}$ (4-3) – i$^{4}$ and culminates in a V$^{♭9}$ /F#, this time implying the correct key for the next section. This final transition utilizes a four-part chorale texture, which is a common texture used by Escalante for introductions and ends of movements.[43]

[43] Ekaterina Chatski, "Rutas para Explorar los Elementos Estilísticos del Lenguage Musical de un Compositor," in *Música académica costarricense Del presente al pasado cercano* (San José: Ciudad Universitaria Rodrigo Facio, 2002), 245.

**Example 10: Transition into Second Movement**



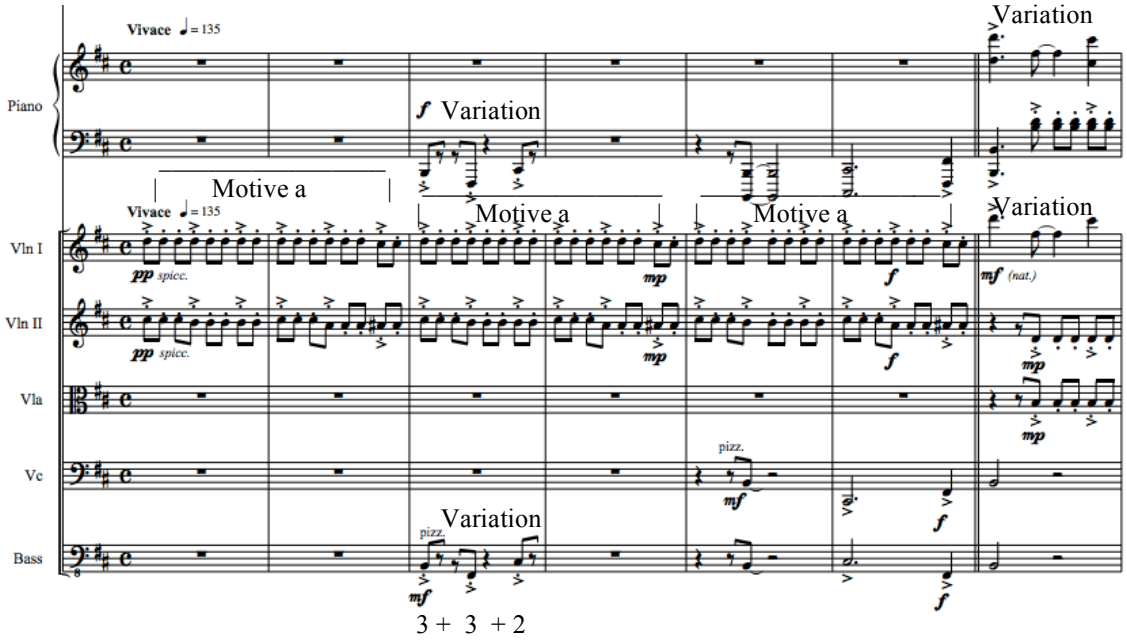

**Motivic Transformation and Unity**

The first two measures of Mamihlapinatapai (Motive a, Example 2) provide most of the material for the construction of the whole movement. More examples will be provided to illustrate the two main ways in which this motive functions as a building block for thematic material and phrase structure.

Example 11 shows how this motive is present in all voices of the opening seven measures of the movement. After the statement of Motive a, the piano and basses come in at m. 3 delineating the beginnings of the 3+3+2 groupings of the Cuban *tresillo*. Even their later entrance at m. 5 coincides with part of the *tresillo*. These two instruments continue to state the Cuban *tresillo* in some degree and form through the entire movement. Example 12 shows a later development of this, mm. 38–44. At m. 7 the

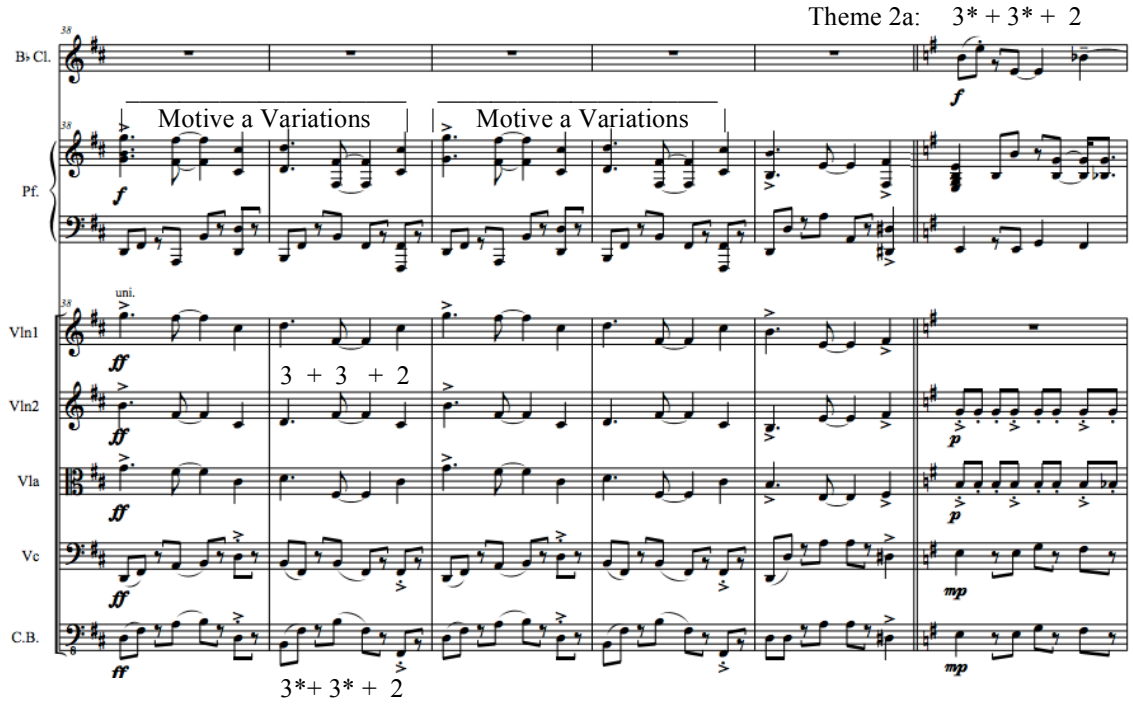
underlying Cuban *tresillo* becomes the melody in the violins (Example 11). That melody is the recurring string ritornello, which alternates with the clarinet's opposing thoughts.

**Example 11: Motive a and variations of Motive a**



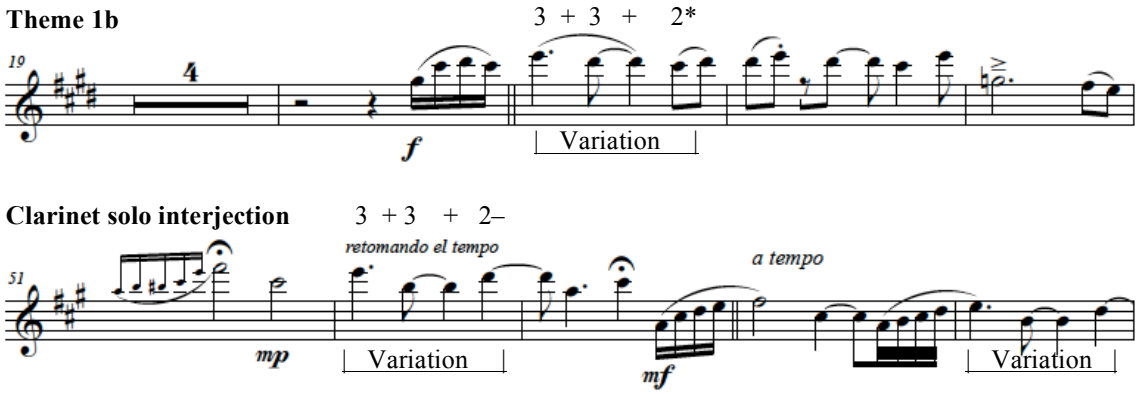

The piano carries both versions of Motive a in Example 12, which are doubled in the strings. The right hand doubles the string melody and the left hand accompanies with another variation of the motive. This varied motive also becomes part of Theme 2a in the clarinet (m. 43).

**Example 12: Variations of Motive a**




Motive a is found repeated and varied in many ways. The clarinet part includes the most variations on the motive. Example 12 shows one of the most common variations present in Theme 2a, and Example 13 includes two other common variations presented in the clarinet line. These variations tend to embellish the motive in different ways, always keeping the feel of the underlying 3+3+2 *tresillo*.

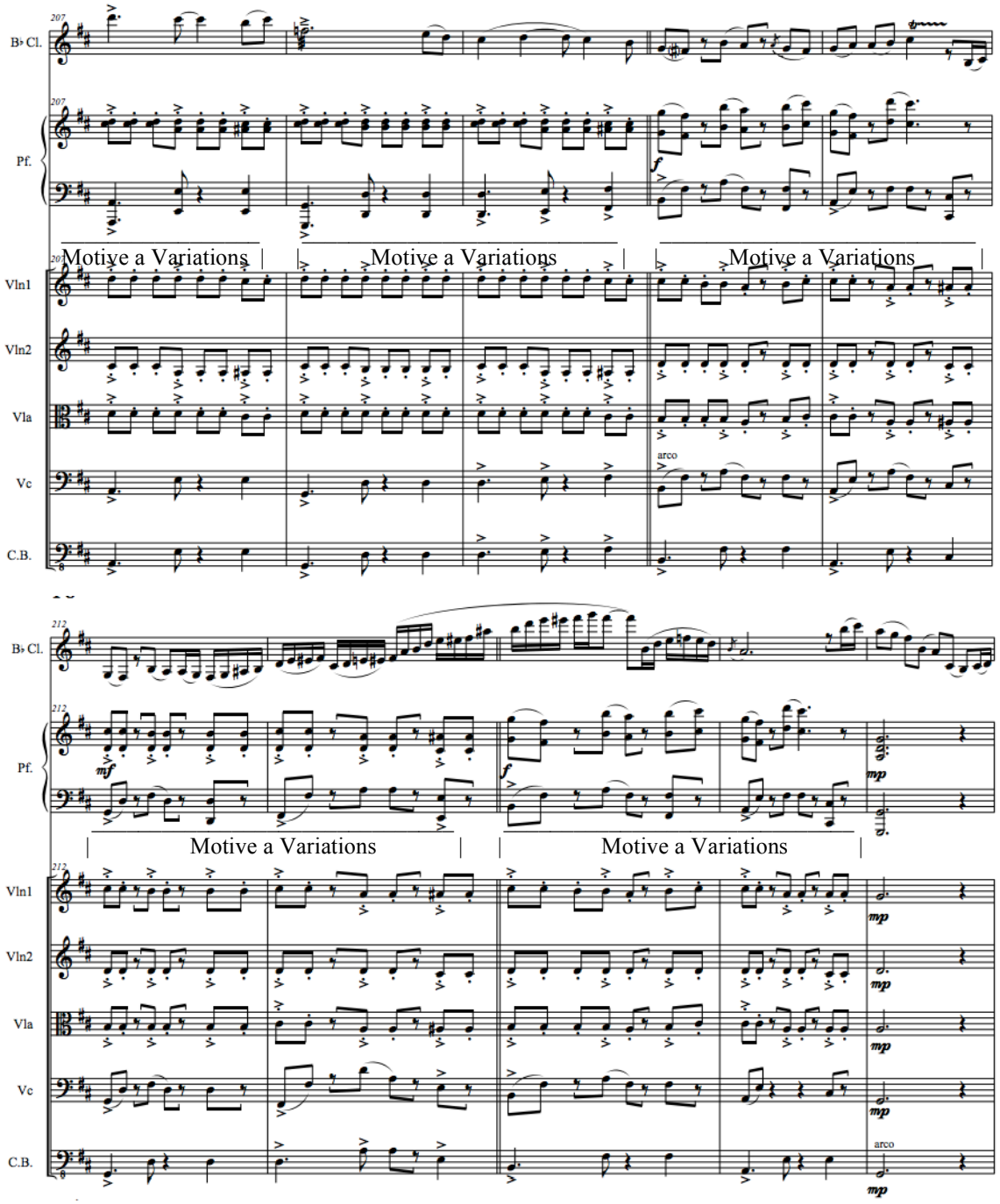
**Example 13: Variations of Motive a in B♭ clarinet part**



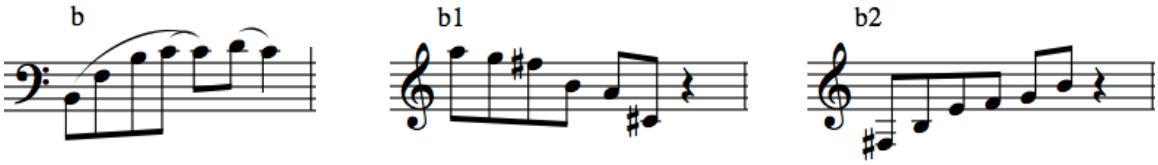

Motive a plays a very important role in the thematic content of the movement, but it also plays an important role in the structure underneath the themes. Most phrases are accompanied by repetitions of Motive a and variations of it (Example 12). By adding up these two-measure structures Escalante creates balanced phrases of four and eight measures. Example 14 is a great demonstration of how the underlying structure, made up by variations of the two-measure Motive a, supports the melodies in the clarinet, forming long phrases.

The unity of Mamihlapinatapai is very much linked to the opening motive, but there are two more motives that are prominent in its construction: Motive b (and variations b1, b2), an eighth-note ascending pattern (Example 15) and Motive c (Example 17), a variation of tango rhythm. Both motives are most prominent at the ends of phrases and or sections, adding variety and contrast to the movement.

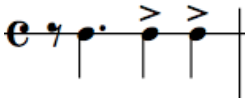
**Example 14: Additions of two-measure Motive a and its Variations**



**Example 15: Motive b and its variations**




**Example 16: Motive c**



**Is Mamihlapinatapai Minimalist?**

Mamihlapinatapai has a strong Latin flavor. Its motives are based on tango and the Cuban *tresillo* rhythms, both of which give it somewhat of a Latin feel. There are two particular sections where the tango rhythm is so strong that it can easily make the listener picture the actual dance—mm. 43–48 during the statement of the second theme, and mm. 117–126 during the bouncy imitative counterpoint section in the development. Interestingly enough, Carlos Escalante never intended to write a tango-like movement. In our interview he said:

> You tell me and Juan Trigos the Mexican composer tells me, and many others tell me that the first movement is tango-like. I had absolutely no intention of doing that; actually I thought it had turned out sounding far from Latin American. I said to myself, this turned out kind of John Adams, because of the rhythm in the basses. …[44]

[44] Carlos Escalante, interview by author, San José, Costa Rica, August 12, 2013. "vos me decís y muchos me dicen, Juan Trigos el compositor mexicano, que el primero es medio tangueado, vieras que no tuve absolutamente ninguna intensión de hecho yo pensé que me había quedo muy poco latinoamericano. Yo dije esto me quedó muy John Adams, por el ritmo que llevan los bajos..." (translation mine)

I didn't initially think this movement was tango-like. When I received the first draft from Escalante he said he was worried that it might be a bit minimalist, and he was anxious to know my opinion of the draft. I was concerned about his comment, because I'm not fond of the minimalist style. I studied the score and I was initially unsure if I completely liked the piece, especially after Escalante's comment—I couldn't help but associate the piece to the minimalist style.

Kyle Gann describes minimalism as a stripped-down, diatonically tonal, pattern-oriented repetitive style that arose in the 1960's.[45] Keith Potter describes it as a term borrowed from visual arts to describe a style of composition characterized by an intentionally simplified rhythmic, melodic and harmonic vocabulary.[46] Its most important exponents in music include Steve Reich and Philip Glass, whose music drastically broke away from the complex musical techniques of the 20th century, in particular serialism. The simplicity of harmony and repetitive rhythms of American popular music, and the time-suspending quality of non-Western music (such as African drumming, and Indian raga) inspired their compositions. Glass referred to this new style as "intentionless music," since it replaced the goal-oriented directionality of Western classical tradition with something more typical of non-Western cultures.[47]

Mamihlapinatapai exhibits a number of minimalist qualities. The most pervasive is its constant rhythm. It opens with repetitions of Motive a (Example 2), which is made up of a constant eighth-note pulsation characteristic of the minimalist style. This pattern is repeated and is very much present during the first 34 measures of the movement, and in

[45] Kyle Gann, "A Forest from the Seeds of Minimalism: An Essay on Postminimal and Totalist Music," in Minimalism Festival Program, Berliner Gesellschaft für Neue Musik, 1998, accessed March 27, 2014, http://www.kylegann.com/postminimalism.html.
[46] Keith Potter, "Minimalism," *Grove Music Online*, accessed March 27, 2014.
[47] Jonathan Sheffer, *Minimalism and the Baroque* (New York: EOS Music Inc., 1997), 2.

other main sections. Also, Motive a, underlies the Cuban *tresillo*, which makes up most of the motivic material of the movement, and is stated almost continually in the basses. As demonstrated in the previous section (3), there are a minimal number of motives. The movement is also diatonically tonal and its harmony is repetitive and not complex. Both harmony and rhythm create ostinatos that are an intrinsic part of the minimalist style. Despite this list of minimal characteristics, the movement does not fully fit the aesthetic of minimalism, as I argue below.

Escalante compared this movement specifically to John Adams' compositional style. John Adams is recognized as a postminimalist. Gann calls postminimalism:

> a reliance on minimalism's steady beat, diatonic tonality, and even formal archetypes, but an inclusiveness bringing together ideas from a daunting array of musical sources. Within its smooth exterior, postminimalism is a big melting pot in which all the world's musics swim together in unobtrusive harmony […] Their music tends to be tonal, mostly consonant (or at least never tensely dissonant), and based on a steady pulse […] Like most Baroque works, the music does not tend to change mood or momentum within a movement. [48]

Adams embraces most of those postminimalist qualities and more. He took the impersonality of minimalism, its mechanistic structure, its emotional detachment and gave it an expressive power of nearly neo-romantic intensity.[49] Of those composers who have been categorized as minimalists, Adams is by far the most anchored in Western classical tradition—roving tonal centers, fluid tempos and complex formal schemes make his brand of minimalism distinct from that of composers like Reich or Glass.[50]

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[48] Kyle Gann, "Minimal Music, Maximal Impact: Minimalism's Immediate Legacy: Postminimalism," NewMusicBox, 2001, accessed March 27, 2014, http://web.archive.org/web/20110604040811/http://www.newmusicbox.org/article.nmbx?id=1536.
[49] Jonathan Sheffer, *Minimalism and the Baroque*, 9.
[50] Sarah Cahill, "John Adams", *Grove Music Online*, last modified October 22, 2008, accessed March 27, 2014.

Escalante's approach does resemble that of John Adams. Escalante also adopted some of these postminimalist procedures in his clarinet concerto such as a steady beat, a diatonic tonality that is mostly consonant, formal archetypes, and combined these with other styles, in this case Latin rhythms. Like Adams, Escalante relies more on Western classical tradition, and implements reduction of minimalist gestures to the accompaniment, as Adams does in his opera *Nixon in China* (1987), so that melody can soar.[51] This last remark is especially true in the clarinet concerto, where the clarinet is never overpowered and sings freely above the more minimalist foundation.

Is it possible then that this movement falls into the postminimalism category the composer suspected? My close study of the piece leads me to think this is not the case. The minimalist devices in the movement are only one part of its composition and do not necessarily come from American minimalism. Mamihlapinatapai is full of Latin American rhythm, and its repetitive harmonic rhythm and ostinatos on Cuban *tresillo*, which are the most notable minimalist procedures in the movement, are typical of Latin American folkloric and popular music. The opening driving Motive a is typical of minimalist and postminimalist music, and probably the one aspect that immediately suggests this style. This motive, though, is not sustained throughout the movement, as it probably would be in a truly minimalist or postminimalist work.

After listening to the Escalante concerto, Paul Epstein, one of the early postminimalists, agreed with my conclusion:

> The Concierto [*sic*] is an engaging piece. I agree that the folk influence in the 2nd movement, esp. in the orchestral patterns, is much more apparent than anything minimalist or postminimalist. Of course folk music has been an important influence on minimalism from the beginning, providing

[51] Jonathan Sheffer, *Minimalism and the Baroque*, 10.

> at the very least models of the use of diatonic and modal pitch collections, additive rhythms, etc. But I think the sensibility of the Escalante is anything but minimalist.[52]

Mamihlapinatapai's minimalist features ultimately work as a background for a series of elements that make this movement highly diverse and compelling. The main element is contrast. Contrasts are present throughout the movement in sudden and gradual changes of dynamics, and in the juxtaposition of legato melodies in the clarinet against staccato or syncopated accompaniment. There are also contrasting themes, which delineate a clear form. The contrast is especially clear between Themes 1a and 1b and the alternating string ritornello (mm. 7–43). Diversity is also present in drastic changes of texture, ranging from full *tutti* to only clarinet, piano alone, or clarinet and light accompaniment. The character of the movement continuously evolves—from a minimalist start to a tango-like section during Theme 2a, to a cadenza full of mystery and color, to a more jazzy feel at the opening of the development, eventually going back to the minimalist opening of the recapitulation, and closing with a slow four-part chorale texture. The tempo is also dramatically reduced during the retransition and final transition to the second movement, an aspect that creates more diversity.

The amount of contrast found in the piece is not the only feature that creates variety. The minimal number of motives is subjected to many variations. Themes are also varied, especially restated themes in the development. Harmonically the movement has a clear sense of tonality and direction, and its melodic lines are very expressive and colorful. The clarinet's initial Aeolian flavor (m. 11) and the inclusion of E#, before and after its entrance, creates a surprising dissonance that departs from the mode and

[52] Paul Epstein, e-mail message to Cynthia Folio, April 1st, 2014.

introduces the leading tone. The overall result is a movement full of life and character that exhibits minimalist American and Latin American devices, derived from popular, and neo-classical and neo-romantic elements reflected in its form and melodic lines. One thing is true: Mamihlapinatapai is a melting pot of the world's music, as postminimalism is defined by Gann.

# CHAPTER 4
# MOVEMENT 2, "HEDONISMO SE ESCRIBE CON H"

## About the Title

When I started learning *Hedonismo se escribe con H* (Hedonism is written with H) I thought about how the title could possibly refer to the music. Hedonism is the pursuit of human pleasures and desires; therefore, in my mind, the idea that this movement must be emphasizing that meaning became increasingly important, especially since the title emphasizes that hedonism is written with "h." While I thought I understood the connection between the title and the music as I was learning the piece, I later found out from the composer that the story about the title was something completely unrelated.

The title of this movement has a funny story. When I asked the composer about it he said:

> The story behind "Hedonismo empieza con H" is such a stupid thing, just as me writing hedonism without "h" in a history class. There is also a Spanish play called "Amor se escribe con A" (Love is written with L). My students corrected me and it was quite embarrassing. The history professor gives a spiel about hedonism, writes the word on the board, and writes it wrong. And I don't believe I am a bad speller, so that was a title that I pulled out of my sleeve.[53]

[53] Carlos Escalante, interview by author, San José, Costa Rica, August 12, 2013. "En el caso de Hedonismo empieza con H es una cosa tan estúpida como que un día escribí hedonismo sin H en una clase de historia. Y hay una obra de teatro española que se llama "Amor se escribe con A" y me acuerdo que mis estudiantes me corrigieron, y yo dije que vergüenza, el profesor de historia se hecha un discurso sobre el concepto del hedonismo lo escribe en la pizarra y los escribe mal. Y yo no creo tener tan mala ortografía, entonces ese si fue un titulo medio sacado de la manga." (translation mine)

Even though the title clearly wasn't meant to signify anything about the pursuit of human pleasures, "the sensual nature of the piece" does not allow me to disregard this possible meaning.

## An Approach to *Danzón*

After writing what Escalante thought to be a minimalist Americanized first movement he was convinced he should write a clearly Latin American second movement.[54] He decided to write a bolero, because it is a slow romantic song danced in Latin America. He began his research on bolero harmonies and progressions, ready to write one, but in the end it became a *danzón.* In my interview with him he said:

> It wasn't intentional; simply a *danzón* came out, because all these genres are very close to each other, many times it is just a matter of tempo. If you are under eighth note equal 60 it is a bolero, if you are above then it is something else. Even the Cuban son and bolero are very close to each other.[55]

### *About Danzón*

Until about 1920, the *danzón* was Cuba's national dance.[56] It developed from the 2/4 contradanza to which the *cinquillo* (Example 17) was incorporated. French settlers brought the *cinquillo* to Cuba from Santo Domingo.[57] The *cinquillo* is of clear African origin and it has a rhythmic regularity and the symmetry of certain percussive rituals of voodoo.[58] Miguel Failde Pérez, the so-called creator of the *danzón*, used this rhythm

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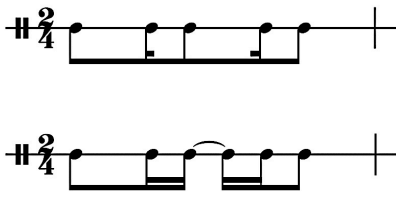
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid. "No fué algo intencional simplemente salió un danzón, porque todas esas formas están muy relacionadas, muchas veces es un asunto de tempo nada mas. Por ejemplo: si es por debajo de negra igual 60 es un bolero si es por encima es otra cosa, inclusive el son cubano y el bolero están muy relacionados entre si." (translation mine)
[56] Alejo Carpentier, *Music in Cuba* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 223.
[57] Maya Roy, *Cuban Music* (Princeton, NJ: Marcus Wiener Publishers, 2002), 84.
[58] Alejo Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, 148–149.

abundantly and deliberately. His piece "Las Alturas de Simpson," premiered in 1879, stands as the milestone debut in popular memory of a form that would be danced in Cuba for the next seventy years.[59]

**Example 17: *Cinquillo***



Before Failde the *contradanza* and the *danzón* did not differ much, besides the deliberate incorporation of the *cinquillo*. The main initial difference was that the *danzón* was danced arm in arm, and came to replace the dance with figures that was the trademark of the *contradanza*.[60] A great description of this is found in Sublette's book *Cuba and its Music*. There he quotes choreographer Ramiro Guerra. He describes the dance in this way:

> The *danzón*, institutionalized as the national dance of the country, was danced within the fixed mark of a small piece of floor. This meant that the expert dancer had to adjust the movements of his feet to the smallest bodily displacement, which otherwise would have broken the reigning colonial atmosphere. The intertwined couple, scarcely budging from their spot, executed the movements of the dance in the manner of a quiet conversation, as lovers do, only broken in two or more occasions by

[59] Ned Sublette, *Cuba and its Music*, 247.
[60] Alejo Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, 222.

> orchestral interludes, during which the dancers stopped moving, taking little rests to mitigate the excess of heat…[61]

Later on, the principal innovation of the *danzón* was to free itself from the bipartite division of the contradanza/danza, in order to get closer to the tripartite one of the rondo.[62] The *danzón* had a rondo form (ABACA), which allowed different instruments to be featured in different sections and a recurring theme to provide unity. In the *danzón* by Failde, the "first section" (B section) featured the flute or clarinet, and the "second section" (C section) featured the violin.[63] Some later *danzones* incorporated an extra D section. The *danzón*'s flexibility made it popular for many years, being an open-door policy for all the musical elements swirling about the island, regardless of origin.[64]

Harmonically the *danzón* remained close to the classical procedures of its progenitor, the contradanza.[65] It was a simple binary form with simple harmonies designed for dancing.

***Escalante's Danzón***

*Hedonismo se escribe con H* presents a rhythmic similarity with *danzón*. For instance, the first *danzón* by Failde is characterized by a continuous *cinquillo* accompaniment that works as a fundamental background for the diverse sections presented. Likewise, Escalante presents a continuous underlying rhythm that resembles the *cinquillo*, which also functions in the same manner.

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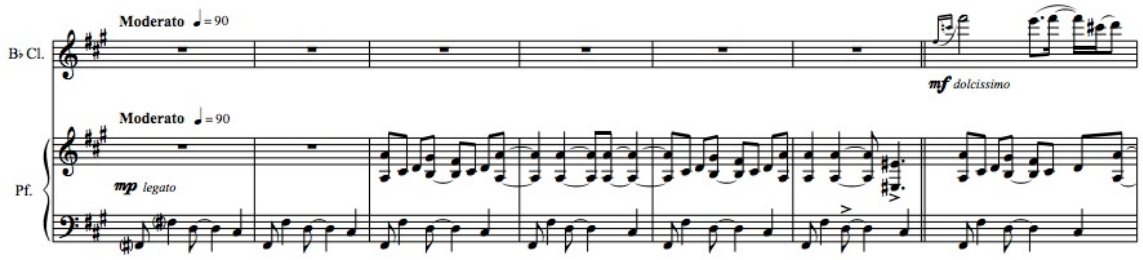
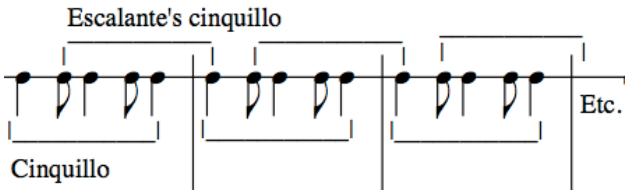
[61] Ned Sublette, *Cuba and its Music*, 345.
[62] Maya Roy, *Cuban Music*, 85.
[63] Ned Sublette, *Cuba and its Music*, 248.
[64] Alejo Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, 223.
[65] Ibid., 224.

The movement starts immediately after *Mamihlapinatapai* with the piano quietly stating the underlying rhythm that will prevail for most of the movement—a jumping syncopated bass melody (Example 18). This rhythm could actually be understood in two different ways: as a variation of *cinquillo* (Example 19), or as a variation of the Cuban *tresillo* (Example 20).

**Example 18: Opening of *Hedonismo se escribe con H***



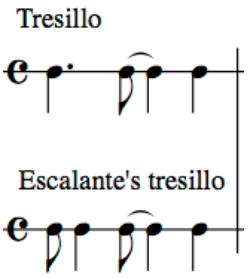

**Example 19: Escalante's *cinquillo***




As seen in the previous example, the *cinquillo* could be reinterpreted as a rhythm starting on its second note and finishing on the first note of the pattern. Adding a ligature between the 3rd and 4th notes of this new grouping completes the fully reinterpreted *cinquillo* found throughout the movement.

The opening rhythm can also be interpreted as a variation on the Cuban *tresillo*. Dividing the first sound of the *tresillo* into two uneven parts it is possible to come to the same rhythmic conclusion (Example 20). Regardless of its specific origin this established new rhythmic cell is clearly based on Latin American syncopated rhythms descending from tango, *tresillo* and *cinquillo*, and the long ostinatos on the new rhythmic cell give the movement a dance-like quality essential to *danzón*.

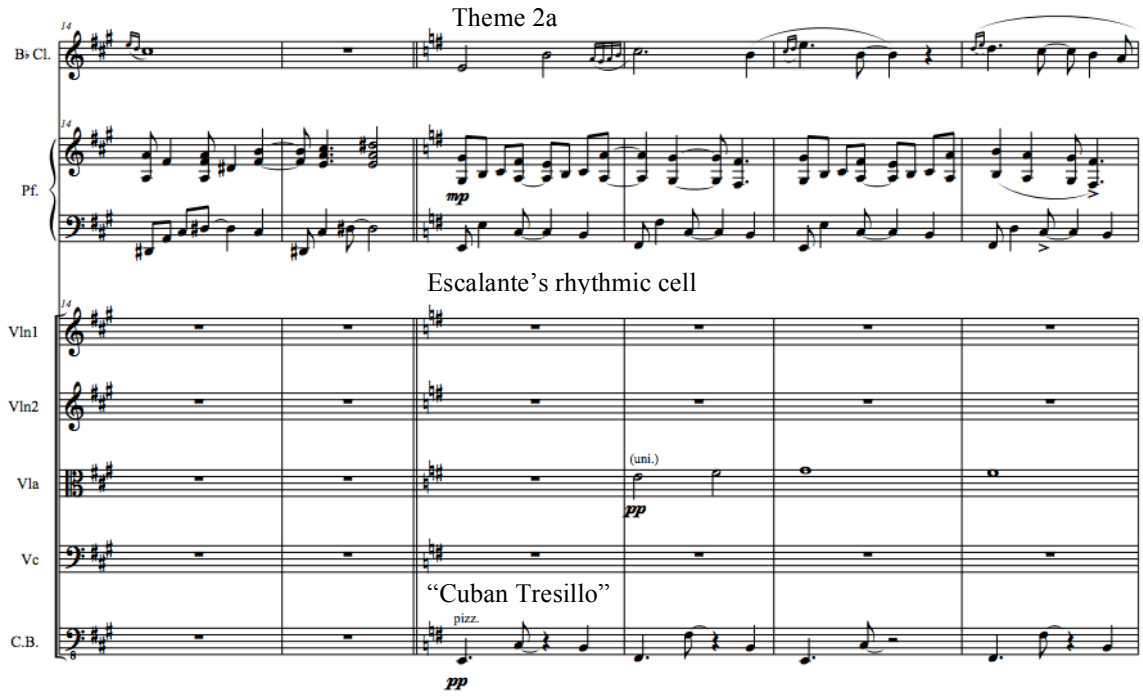
**Example 20: Cuban *tresillo* variation**




Escalante's new rhythmic cell becomes a recurring ostinato in the left hand of the piano, found almost throughout the movement. In m. 3 this ostinato is joined by the right hand of the piano (Example 18) with a syncopated eighth-note passage that continues to accompany each of its appearances. (The right hand rhythm could be said to have somewhat of a *son* bass influence—given that sometimes it avoids the downbeat by slurring into it.) At m. 16 another layer is added: a version of the Cuban *tresillo* that was predominant in the first movement. The repetition of this Cuban *tresillo* (as I will continue to call it even though it is an adaptation of the former) becomes an ostinato (Example 21) in the basses, accompanying the piano's two rhythmic layers until m. 34,

where it continues on its own for another 11 measures. This construction is very similar to that of the *danzón*. *Danzón* staggered African percussion textures, instrumentation and rhythms—including extensive use of symmetrical *cinquillo* and *tresillo* patterns—to create complex instrumental cross-rhythms, while flute or clarinet, violin or bass, developed virtuoso passages.[66]

**Example 21: Ostinato in 2nd movement**




Escalante uses the ostinato to both establish different tonal centers and to move between them. The tonal centers of the movement modulate to different tonalities supported by the ostinatos. Example 21 shows the piano ostinato modulating into the E

[66] William Gradante and Jan Fairley, "Danzón," *Grove Music Online*, accessed March 25, 2014.

minor second theme. Also, the Cuban *tresillo* ostinato continues through m. 55 and it helps establish the new tonality of G minor at m. 46. The compound ostinato, of the Cuban *tresillo* and Escalante´s new rhythmic cell, reenters at m. 98 and maintains the F# minor harmony until the end of the movement. The use of ostinatos in Escalante's work is a common device. Chatski names a few of his works that exhibit similar treatment such as *Hardit Barejo!, De garúas, aguaceros y escamples* and his *Sinfonía Centenario*.[67]

The rhythmic design of the second movement also provides a perfect unity with Mamihlapinatapai, because the second movement uses the same version of the Cuban *tresillo* found in the bass lines of Mamihlapinatapai. As a result Mamihlapinatapai flows effortlessly into the second movement with its slower version of *tresillo*—marked down from ♩= 135 in the first movement to ♩= 96 in the second. The agitated heartbeat of the initial meeting/conversation in Mamihlapinatapai slows down to a comfortable gliding tempo that allows the clarinet and the orchestra to get much more comfortable with each other, just as the *danzón* dancers on a tile.

This movement might not be a true *danzón*, but its rhythms based on Cuban *tresillo* and *cinquillo*, its sweeping lines and graceful interchange between the parts do resemble the dance and its music. Almost as characters set to music, the piano sets the mood (with the opening dance rhythm) for the clarinet to come in with a "mortal" jump (m. 7, Ex. 18) into the altissimo register—just as a leap of faith that following your heart commonly demands—and join with the orchestra at m. 16 in a "hedonistic dance."

[67] Ekaterina Chatski, "Rutas para Explorar los elementos Estilísticos del Lenguaje Musical de un Compositor," 250.

Finally, *Hedonismo se escribe con H*, may have just a dash of *danzón* in its form. They both start with an introduction, followed by a clarinet section, which is then followed by a violin section. Between mm. 34–45 the strings have an extended orchestral interlude that could correspond to the violin section, yet, it is not a full section like it would be in a *danzón*; the piece is a clarinet concerto after all!

**Analysis of Form**

*Hedonismo se escribe con H* is an ABA three-part form (Table 2) with aspects of sonata-allegro form.

**Table 2: Outline of the Form of Movement II, "Hedonismo se escribe con H" (ABA´-Cadenza-Codetta)**

| M. #s | Large Parts | Smaller Parts | Themes | Keys/Roman Numerals |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Intro | Intro | Intro | F# m |
| 7 | A | First Tonal Area | Theme 1a | F# m → chromatic modulation to Em |
| 16 | | Second Tonal Area | Theme 2a | E m → V7 (over G bass) |
| 27 | | | Theme 2b | E m |
| 34 | | Transition | Theme 2a´ | E m → $V^{\flat 9}$ of G m |
| 46 | B | Digression | Theme 3 | G m |
| 72 | | Retransition | Theme 1b | G m → $A\flat^{M9\ (\#11,\ 13)}$ |
| 83 | | Cadenza | Cadenza with piano entrances | F# m |
| 98 | A´ | First Tonal Area | Theme 1c | F# m |
| 110 | | "Second Tonal Area" | Theme 2a | F# m |
| 118 | | | Theme 2b´ | F# m |
| 126 | | Closing | Closing with wide leaps into Codetta | F# m |
| 130 | Codetta | Codetta | Codetta | F# m |

The movement starts with a brief introduction in F# minor. Theme 1a begins at m. 7 in the same key, and after 7 measures the accompaniment begins to modulate to E minor bringing in a second theme at m. 16. Escalante treats the first section (A) like the

exposition of a sonata-allegro, with two tonal areas (FTA and STA). Furthermore, in the restatement of part A Themes 2a and 2b are stated in the principal key of F# minor, just as they would in the recapitulation of a sonata-allegro form.

Even though this movement appears to have a clear exposition and recapitulation, it differs from sonata form because it lacks a development. The middle section (B) represents a digression in the form; it presents a contrasting theme and it is tonally stable. This section does not really explore or elaborate on any of the themes, nor does it modulate to different keys.

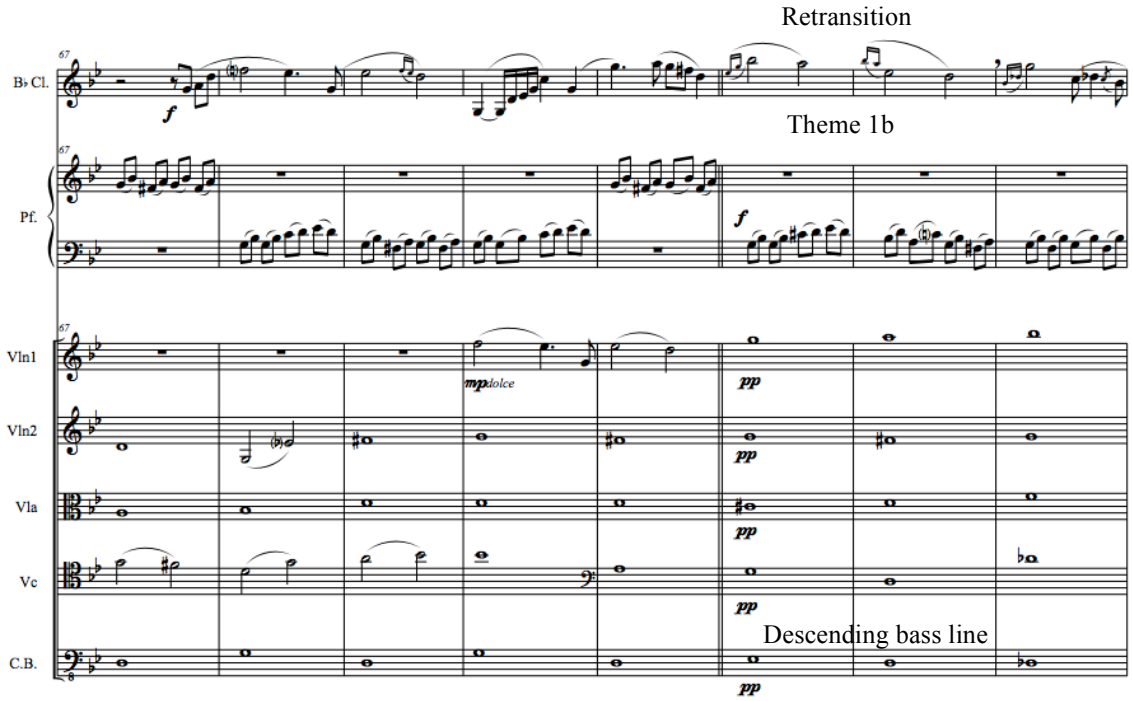
Another aspect that makes this movement similar to sonata-allegro form is that its retransition is somewhat suspenseful, just as many retransitions are in sonata form. The suspense starts at m. 72 where the clarinet states Theme 1b—a variation on Theme 1a. The ongoing traditional I–V–I harmonic progression changes at m. 72 where the basses begin a descending line (E♭ to A♭) that leads into a jazz-flavored $A♭^{M9\ (\#11,\ 13)}$ chord, the final chord of the retransition. Example 22 shows the motion of this retransition, from G minor to an $A♭^{M9\ (\#11,\ 13)}$ chord, which adds suspense and uncertainty.

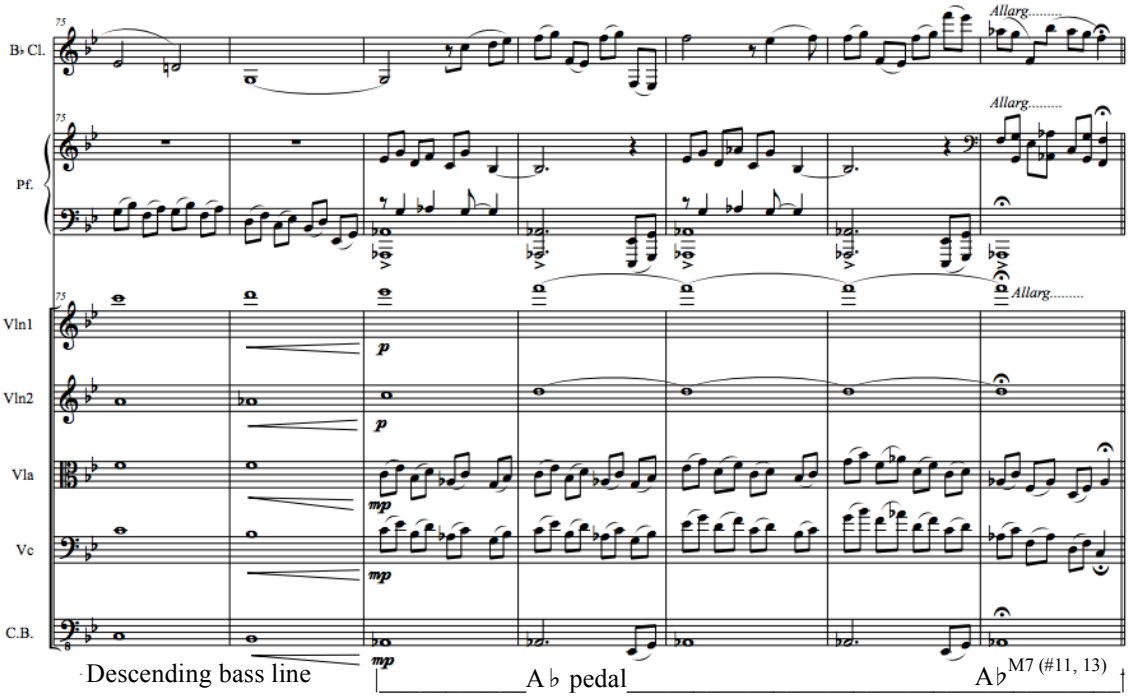
The retransition is followed by a Grand Pause, which adds to the mystery of what is to come. Instead of going back to section A after the pause, as the form would dictate, Escalante introduces a clarinet cadenza. Analogous to the first movement, this cadenza functions as an extended transition back to A even though tonally it immediately returns to the main key of F# minor.

This cadenza can be divided into two sections. In the first section (mm. 83–91), the clarinet states a series of descending lines in the low register, and in the second (mm.

92–98), the clarinet begins a series of ascending lines that lead back to the restatement of A. Before the restatement of A Escalante brings in the piano (m. 90), then the strings (m. 94), giving a false sense that the theme is starting again, similar to a "false recapitulation"; the actual return of A is delayed until the wide clarinet leaps at m. 98.

**Example 22: Hedonismo se escribe con H, Retransition**






The form concludes with a codetta, in which a final *fortissimo* wide clarinet leap into the altissimo register (m. 130) marks the final cadence of the movement. The clarinet line slowly descends back to the chalumeau register while the accompaniment continues in softer dynamics until the last closing pizzicato chord in the strings.

**Final Thoughts**

While *Hedonismo se escribe con H* is a sweet movement full of rich orchestral textures and consonant harmony, it is also full of drama. The clarinet line has many big leaps and broken melodies that add tension and surprise. The short clarinet cadenza interrupts the melodious flow, with bold statements in the low register of the clarinet. The drama reaches its highest point nine measures before the end (m.130 or anacrusis to the codetta), where the clarinet does its final leap of a minor 9$^{th}$ into a *fortissimo altissimo*

sustained G#, before dying away until the end of the movement. The second movement is the most simple of the movements, yet highly effective in its discourse.

The minimalism present in this movement, specially reflected in the pervasive ostinatos and repetitive harmonies, is taken from Latin American music. Escalante from the beginning of his creative process aimed to compose a bolero-inspired movement, even though a *danzón* was the final product. The movement's rhythm and mostly simple harmonies are a result of the basic characteristics of this popular music, and as in the first movement, the minimalism in it works as a foundation for more expressive and creative devices.

Mamihlapinatapai and *Hedonismo se escribe con H* share many similarities that allow them to flow uninterruptedly from one to the next, as it is marked on the score. They not only share similar rhythms, but also have very similar constructions. They both share the following traits: cadenzas separating main sections; frequent ostinatos and repeated harmonic patterns; motivic unity and contrasts in dynamics and texture. The material in both movements is reduced and repeated in a minimalist manner, yet their forms are classically oriented, their melodies highly expressive and diverse, making these two movements a unified combination of past and present elements from different traditions and styles.

# CHAPTER 5
# MOVEMENT 3, "EL CIRCO"

## Influence of Federico Fellini's Circus

Escalante's inspiration for El Circo came from the movies of Federico Fellini. Federico Fellini (1920–1993) was a famous Italian film director who created highly original works. Gilbert Salachas describes Fellini's seemingly confused, chaotic, brilliant and spontaneous films as a result of aesthetic necessities that have their own expressive merits.[68] Fellini rejected the traditional laws of dramatic construction, and his imagination acknowledged no boundaries; as a result his films advance abruptly from one scene to the next, taking in everything, and putting together all sorts of bits and pieces.[69] Fellini affirmed that his system was to have no system: "I go to a story to discover what it has to tell me."[70] Some of his most well known films include *La Dolce Vita*, *8 ½* and *La Strada*.

For Fellini cinema was very much like the circus. He said if cinema did not exist that he would have liked to be the director of a big circus, "because it is just that same mixture of technique, precision and improvisation."[71] Fellini's interest in the circus awakened from the first time he saw it. He wrote:

> I felt ecstatic, totally committed to that noise and music, to those monstrous apparitions, to those threats of death. In short, I can say that this type of show, based on wonder and fantasy, on jokes and nonsense, on

[68] Gilbert Salachas, *Federico Fellini* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1969), 75–79.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Federico Felllini, *Fellini on Fellini* (Great Britain: Eyre Nethuen Ltd, 1976), 103.
[71] Ibid., 98.

> fables and on the lack of any coldly intellectual meaning, is just the thing for me.[72]

The circus theme is so prominent in many of Fellini's movies that he even dedicated an entire film to this topic. Fellini's *The Clowns* (1970) was intended to be a documentary on clowns but soon after starting this self-assigned venture he didn't feel comfortable continuing it. For him any commitment was always subjective and emotional[73] and he could not keep his personal views away. As a result the film is a juxtaposition of invention and documentary.

Fellini's films would not be complete without his collaborations with Nino Rota. Nino Rota was his preferred composer because Fellini felt he was the humblest of film composers and creator of extremely functional music.[74] Salachas describes his music as beautiful, flowing and alive, tenacious as a refrain; a lovely, itinerant music that surges forth like a witness, and grows silent when the time for silence arrives.[75] Escalante wanted to expand upon the music of circus, on the music of Fellini's movies. He declared:

> In the third movement I wanted to go deeper into the circus music or into the music of Fellini movies. I wanted to go deeper into music and wanted to try to take advantage of the same things Nino Rota does in Fellini's movies which is to use the concept of the circus to allow flexibility of discourse, because once you have the framework of circus, well, anything can happen: flying people, eating swords, women with horns…you can include whatever you want and it is going to make sense, because the circus is naturally eclectic, supernatural and surreal.[76]

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[72] Ibid., 123.
[73] Fellini, *Fellini on Fellini*, 121.
[74] Ibid., 110.
[75] Gilbert Salachas, *Federico Fellini,* 81.
[76] Carlos Escalante, interview by author, San José, Costa Rica, August 12, 2013. "En el tercer movimiento yo quería profundizar más en la música de circo o en la música de las películas de Fellini. Yo quería tratar de sacar provecho de

It is under this premise that Escalante wrote the third movement of the concerto, which can be also referred to as "Felliniana No. 3" since this is his third work to utilize this source of inspiration. [The previous "Felliniana" works were the *Ricercare* for Solo Clarinet (Felliniana No. 2) and a piece for saxophone, vibraphone and glockenspiel (Felliniana No. 1)]. Escalante explores several different ideas ranging from decisive and forceful to elegant and transparent, while staying mostly in D minor. The ensemble also ranges from full *tuttis* to quartets and solos. Variety permeates the entire movement and a clear strophic theme in the clarinet frames the whole movement. The variety and ambiguity of form present in El Circo are a clear reflection of the composer's chosen program.

**Analysis of Form**

El Circo, meaning "The Circus," is a movement full of variety within an ambiguous form. Table 3, inspired by some of the composer's suggestions, attempts to capture some of the movement's most prominent features, which borrow elements from sonata form, rondo form, and scherzo and trio forms.

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lo mismo que hace Nino Rota en las películas de Fellini que es utilizar la idea del circo para que te permita flexibilidad de discurso, porque una vez que usted tiene el marco del circo diay cualquier cosa puede pasar: gente volando, gente que traga espadas, mujeres cornudas, usted puede meter lo que le dé la gana y va a tener lógica porque el circo es ecléctico, surrealista y sobrenatural por naturaleza." (translation mine)

**Table 3: Outline of the Form of Movement III, "El Circo" (Sonata-Rondo with Trio)**

| M. #s | Large Parts | Small Parts | Themes | Keys/ Roman Numerals |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Intro | Intro | Orchestra Episode | D m |
| 17 | Exposition | First Tonal Area | Theme 1 | D m |
| 32 | | | Orchestra Episode | D m |
| 43 | | | Theme 1a | D m |
| 61 | | | Codetta | D m |
| 69 | Development | Part 1 - Cadenza | Cadenza | V7 |
| 83 | | Part 2 | Orchestra Episode ending with Whole Tone sequence | D m |
| 88 | | Transition | T1 (circus) | V7/A |
| 96 | | | T2 Orchestra Episode | D → V7/G-G |
| 114 | | Part 3 (*poco meno mosso*) | Theme 2 | G m-V7 |
| 131 | | Retransition | T3 (Orchestra Episode + circus) ending with Whole Tone sequence | C m → viiº7/G |
| 141 | | | T4 Orchestra Episode (codetta) | G m → V7/D (over B♭ bass) |
| 151 | Trio | *meno mosso* | Theme 1b (ctpt quartet) | D m |
| 193 | | Codetta | Theme 1b´ | D m-emphasis on A |
| 202 | Recapitulation | Theme 1a (Closing) | Theme 1a | D m |

El Circo can be heard as a sonata because it has an exposition, development and recapitulation, even though it deviates from the traditional form in two ways. The first discrepancy is that its exposition does not present the thematic or harmonic contrast that is expected; it only has one theme that is stated twice and in the same key. The second discrepancy is that the movement includes a sizable slower contrasting section (mm. 151–201) between the development and the recapitulation that is difficult to consider as part of the development. This section (labeled as Trio on Table 3) breaks away from the development introducing the tonic key of D minor as well as new material in a slower tempo. The section is somewhat self-contained and it does not belong to any of the traditional sonata sections. It only relates to them by citing some of the previous material,

as an inward commentary of events, and by emphasizing the note A towards the end of the section. This emphasis on A functions as a dominant leading back to the recapitulation. These two discrepancies in the form make it impossible to refer to this movement solely as sonata form.

El Circo is also influenced by rondo in the sense that the opening orchestral material behaves as a type of ritornello that frames every entrance of the clarinet. These ritornellos constantly evolve throughout the movement; they are never stated in the same way subjected to variations, extensions, and incorporation of new material. In a way the movement is more reminiscent of baroque ritornello form, bringing back fragments of the opening material. El Circo is mostly inspired by rondo's alternating nature because it doesn't follow its exact specifications.

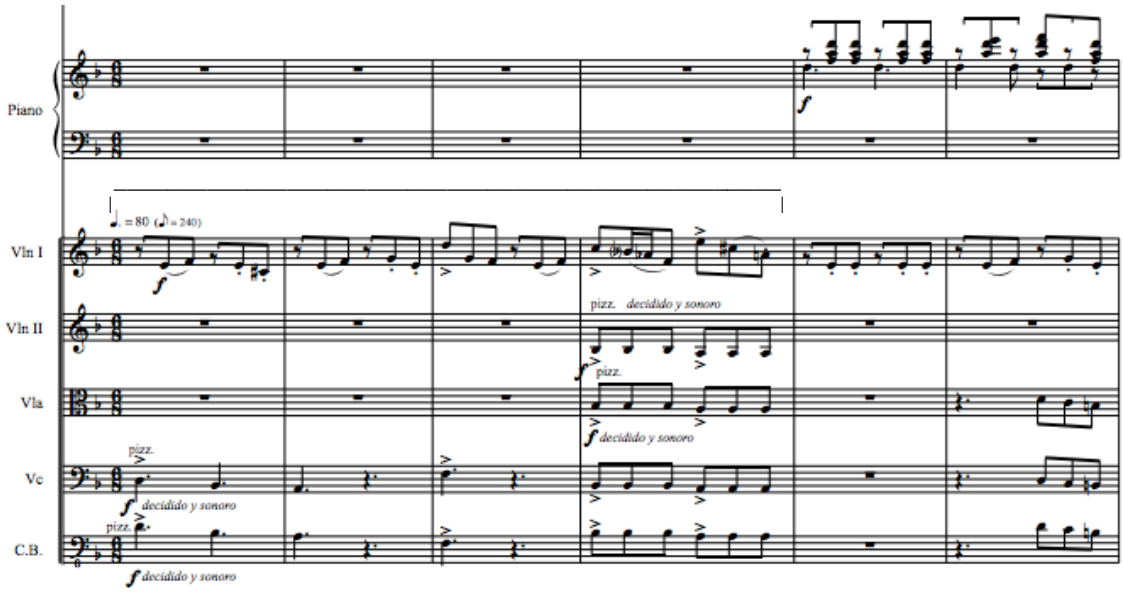
Finally, this movement resembles a Scherzo with Trio because of its slower contrasting section found at m. 151 (*meno mosso*), which is framed by the opening and closing A sections—which appear as the exposition and recapitulation in Table 3. In this view El Circo could be analyzed as a Scherzo with Trio with an added development.

This movement also resembles a scherzo because of its similar character. Scherzo literally means joke. Beethoven took the term literally by giving his scherzo movements a light and often humorous tone. He also invested them with elements of surprise or caprice.[77] El Circo is not a very fast movement, as most scherzos are, but it does have that lively playful feeling. The opening few measures set this main character (Example 23). The lower strings establish the beat with a dotted-quarter-note descending line. The violins play syncopations off of this line that are light and full of variety. The marked

[77] Tilden A. Russell and Hugh Macdonald, "Scherzo," *Grove Music Online*, accessed April 6, 2014.

articulations in the violins, including accents, slurs and staccatos, give the phrase a playful character. It is possible to see in the first measures of the movement the incipient elements of surprise and caprice that will develop later in the movement.

**Example 23: Opening of El Circo**

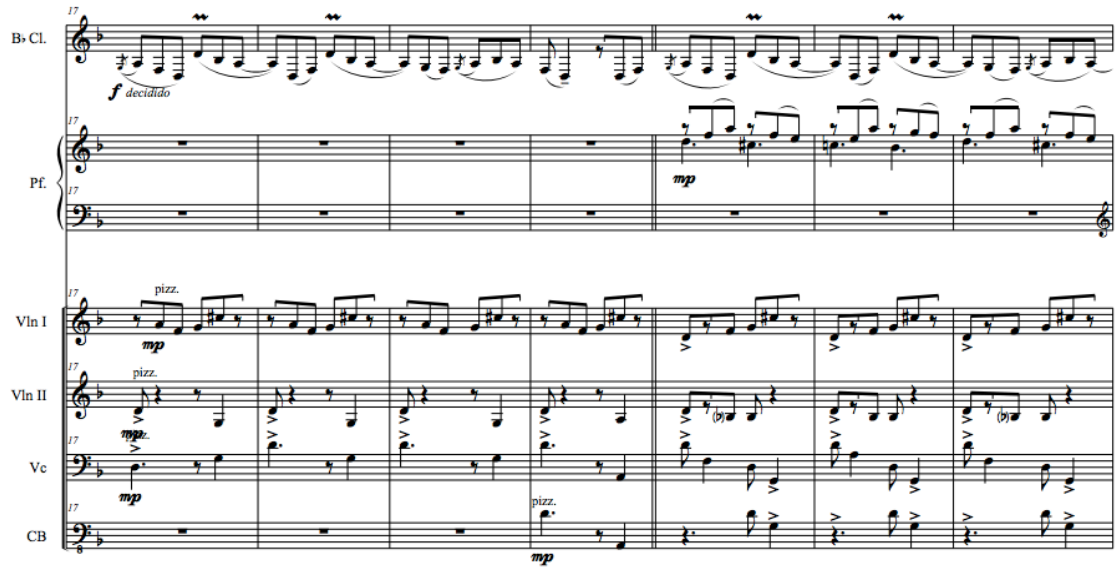



Before continuing my discussion of form I would like to address some aspects involving the construction of this movement.

The first four measures of El Circo are analogous to the first two of Mamihlapinatapai; they introduce the basic material of the movement and also function as a building block for the entire movement. Yet, in El Circo Escalante treats these introductory measures in a slightly different way. The opening four measures are never repeated in the same manner; they are always repeated with variations or additions that

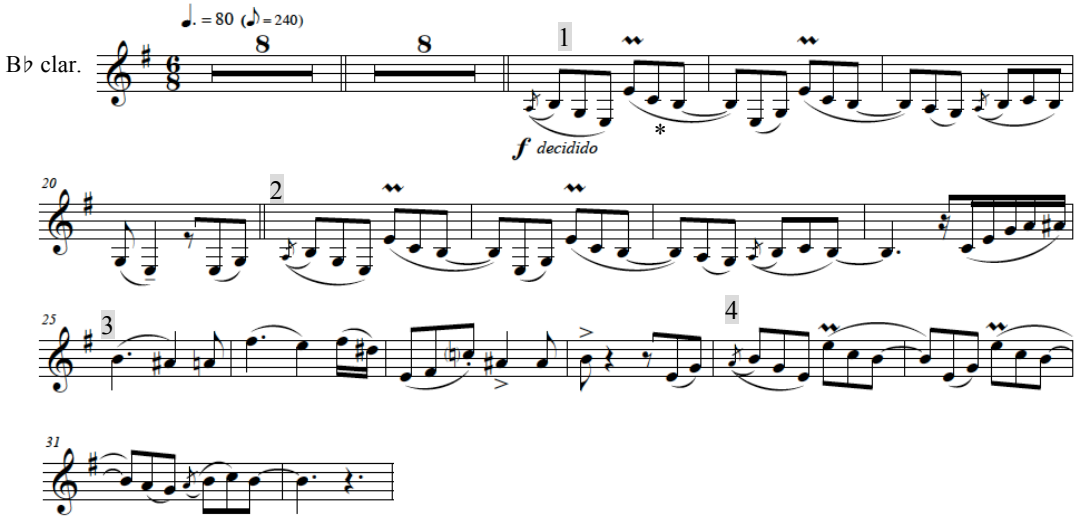
continue to evolve as the music unfolds and more elements are introduced. Because the material in the opening four measures is never repeated in the same way, ostinatos (characteristic in the previous movements) are non-existent in this movement. During Theme 1 (Example 24) and Theme 1a the strings do engage in repetitive patterns, but these only last for four measures at a time.

**Example 24: Theme 1, four-measure repetitive accompaniment**



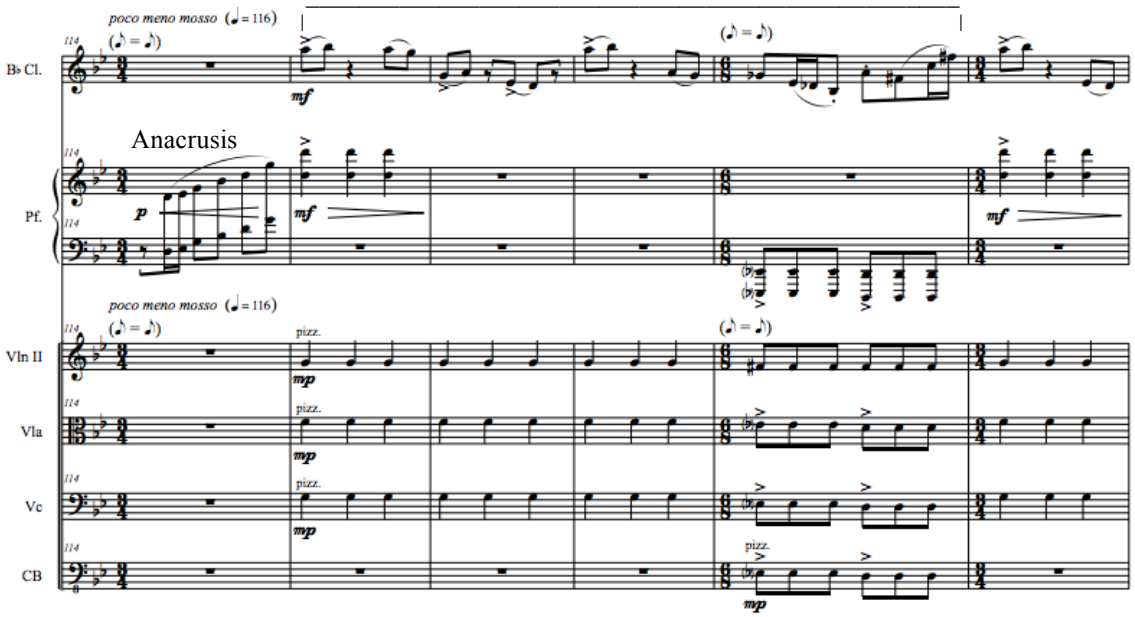

This four-measure grouping is used by Escalante to build phrases in El Circo, just as in Mamihlapinatapai, where he uses the opening two-measure group. The introduction itself is made up of two eight-measure phrases, each made up of two groups of four measures. Clear examples of this four-measure phrase construction are the main themes: Theme 1 (Example 25) and its variation Theme 1a, and Theme 2. Also, Escalante himself usually places double bars at the ends of phrases and sections, making the structure clear.

**Example 25: El Circo, Theme 1**




Even though the first four measures are never repeated in the same way, they do introduce a recurring gesture. The fourth measure of the group is more active than the first three—with *tutti* eighth notes and added sixteenths in the first violins (Example 23). This is true throughout the introduction and in other sections that use this specific four-measure construction such as Theme 2 (Example 26). This theme is comprised of four groups of four measures, in which the fourth measure of each group ends with *tutti* eighth notes in the strings and added sixteenths in the clarinet part. Example 26 shows the first four measures of the theme introduced by a piano anacrusis.

**Example 26: El Circo, Theme 2**




Escalante also translates this fourth measure gesture at a larger scale as a progressive increase in the composite rhythm, scoring more complex rhythms at the ends of phrases and at the end of some sections. Example 27 illustrates how this device is used at the end of the orchestral episode before Theme 1a. In this example it is possible to see the contrasting textural change between m. 42 (end of orchestral episode) and m. 43 (beginning of Theme 1a). There are many other instances where this device is used, as in part 1 of the development where the orchestra is most active at the end of the clarinet phrases.

Not many features can be generalized about the form and construction of this movement. Its components continue to develop throughout the movement, the trio section has a different character and construction from the rest of the movement, and its form is ambiguous.

**Example 27: Progressive increase in composite rhythm**

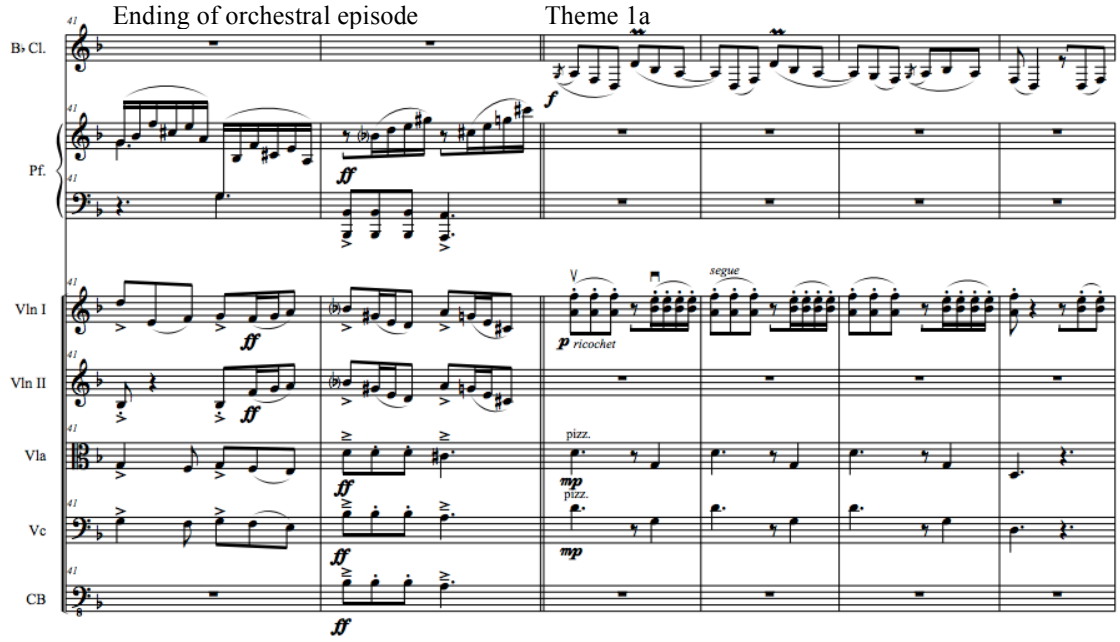



Table 4 illustrates some of my ideas for another possible approach to the form. This alternative analysis considers this movement an ABB´A´ structure, since Theme 2 and the Trio do share some similarities. This approach to the form suggests an almost palindromic structure with different A lengths. The difficulty of placing this movement in any one form is probably a direct result of the composer's source of inspiration, which will be considered in the next section.

**Table 4: Another Possible Outline of the Form of Movement III, "El Circo"**

| M. #s | Large Parts | Small Parts | Themes | Keys/ Roman Numerals |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Intro | Intro | Orchestra Theme | D m |
| 17 | A | First Tonal Area | Theme 1 | D m |
| 32 | | | Orchestra Theme variation | D m |
| 43 | | | Theme 1a | D m |
| 61 | | | Codetta | D m |
| 69 | | Cadenza | Cadenza | V7 |
| 83 | | Closing & Transition | Orchestra Theme ending with Whole Tone sequence | D m |
| 88 | | Transition | T1 (circus) | V7/A |
| 96 | | | T2 Orchestra Theme variation | D → V7/G-G |
| 114 | B | *poco meno mosso* | Theme 2 | G m-V7 |
| 131 | | Retransition | T3 (Orchestra Theme variation + circus) ending with Whole Tone sequence | C m → vii°7/G |
| 141 | | | T4 Orchestra Theme variation (codetta) | G m → V7/D (over Bb bass) |
| 151 | B´ | *meno mosso* | Theme 1b (ctpt quartet) | D m |
| 193 | | Codetta | | D m-emphasis on A |
| 202 | A´ | Theme 1a (Closing) | Theme 1a Orchestra Theme developed | D m |

# CHAPTER 6
# PERFORMANCE NOTES

This concerto can be performed with different ensembles. The best effect is achieved with a full orchestra, as it is intended, but it can also be performed quite successfully as a chamber piece. As a chamber piece it involves a total of seven instruments: piano, string quintet (two violins, viola, cello and double bass), and solo clarinet. Escalante also wrote a piano reduction, making it also possible to perform only with piano accompaniment.

## Understanding the "Latin Groove" in This Concerto

One of the most important considerations for any clarinetist who plays this concerto is understanding the "Latin Groove" that is especially important in the first two movements.

In Mamihlapinatapai the Cuban *tresillo* rhythm found in the lower strings gives the movement its Latin feel. For this reason it is important to add a little "flavor" to this rhythm by playing it slightly detached and leading into the next bar. Son-clave found in salsa music is a great example that can help with the interpretation of the *tresillo* rhythm. In many passages Escalante presents this rhythm *pizzicato*, emphasizing its light and bouncy character. Special attention should be given to make sure this rhythm is not compressed, allowing it to have more space between its parts. It should never sound rushed; it should sound comfortable and relaxed. Also, in some sections the *tresillo* is presented with an accent on the fourth beat, showing the importance of the fourth beat

going into the next measure. Giving this rhythm and its variations direction and space will provide a solid foundation for the rest of the voices to flow effortlessly.

Each presentation of the Cuban *tresillo* in the first movement is not necessarily approached in the same way. The violins and the clarinet have versions of the *tresillo* that are quite melodious. These should be sustained and help carry the melodies through several measures. Phrasing should be the primary focus for these lines.

The second movement has the most Latin American influences of the three. Inspired by the bolero, it should have a very relaxed feeling, even at what seems to be a fast tempo for the material (♩= 96). It is a good idea to listen to some boleros in order to understand this source of inspiration and its romantic quality. *Bésame Mucho* by Consuelo Velázquez is one of the most famous and representative of the genre. Understanding this genre will help approach the movement with the right feeling. The opening solo piano introduction is crucial in setting the mood for the entire movement, therefore, it is imperative that it is expansive, expressive and in a way uneventful, with no hints of agitation—just a simple pattern that sets the mood for the entire movement. Playing the opening with the "right feeling" is of utmost importance for setting up the "hedonistic *danzón*."

**General Considerations**

Escalante is very clear and specific about his markings. Everything in the score demands special attention. The correct execution of every dot, accent, *crescendo* and slur will make a big difference in the overall result. A few recommendations for the interpretation of some of these elements, offered below, can be helpful.

Escalante wanted the accents in the first movement to be very aggressive, especially in the clarinet part. He personally asked me to make them harsh and even nasty sounding. After this request I suggested making the sound harsh by adding flutter tongue in some of them, an idea that he loved and that he included in the score. In general all accents should be quite strong.

The appoggiaturas in this concerto are an integral part of the main themes, and the clarinetist should try to stretch these. In the first movement they slide inside the clarinet melodies almost as jazzy embellishments that add variety and movement to the lines. In the first movement, part 2 of the development and other sections, where appoggiaturas appear at the beginning of the melody, it is important to start them before the beat. In the opening clarinet entrance of the second movement this is particularly important. It is advisable to start this appoggiatura almost a whole beat before, making sure there is enough time to prepare the jump into G#6.[78] All appoggiaturas should be very melodic.

Finally, the mordents in the third movement should be played almost as sixteenth notes, in a very melodic manner, and the *glissandos* should be performed with enthusiasm; they are an integral part of the circus character in the movement.

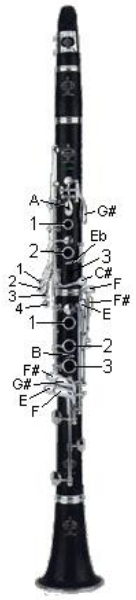
**Looking at Some Clarinet Passages**

The Escalante Concerto presents several different challenges for the clarinetist in each of its movements. This section will provide fingerings and suggestions that will help overcome some of the difficulties presented. All examples included are presented in B♭. Regarding fingerings, it is important to note that every instrument is different and might

[78] ASA scientific pitch notation for G# two octaves above middle C (C4).

not respond in the same way, therefore my suggested fingerings are just that, suggestions that might or might not work for various instruments. Ultimately one should always aim to find the best fingering combination for the desired result.

Timothy Reichard's "The Woodwind Fingering Guide"[79] will be used as a reference for fingering notation in this section.




Pressing all the keys down would look like this:

RT $A^{G\#}$1 2 $^{Eb}$ 3 $^{C\#\ F\ F\#\ E}$ | $_{1234}$1 2 $_{B}$ 3 $_{F\#\ G\#\ E\ F}$

R = register key is pressed

T = thumb hole is closed

Figure 1: Timothy Reichard's Fingering Guide

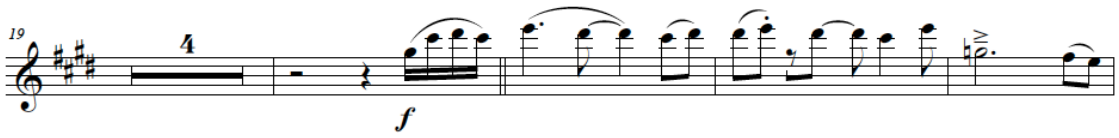
***Mamihlapinatapai***

One of the first challenges that I encountered in this movement was how to make the anacrusis to measure 24 (Example 28) as clean and as in tune as possible at ♩=135 without having to use the forked fingering for D#. If your RT-23|-2-$_{G\#}$ fingering for D# works perfectly and you are comfortable playing this passage with this fingering, or with

[79] Timothy Reichard, "The Woodwind Fingering Guide," 1998, accessed April 12, 2014, http://www.wfg.woodwind.org/clarinet/cl_fing.html.

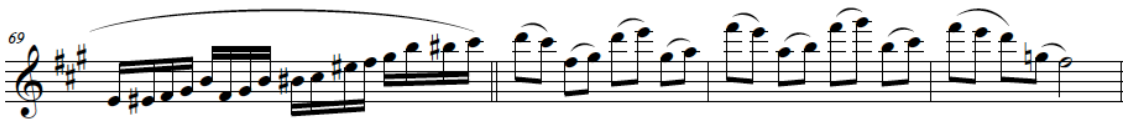
the forked fingering (RT-23|1-$_{B}$- $_{G\#}$), then you probably will not need my suggestion. In any case my fingering is included below in case it works better. I recommend playing this passage fingering the D# as a C# adding the A and G# keys (D# = RTA-23|12- $_{G\#}$). I found this to be the best fingering to accomplish a perfect in-tune legato between C# and D#. This fingering works especially well when played fast and it slurs perfectly because the finger position for C# is maintained.

**Example 28: Anacrusis to measure 24**



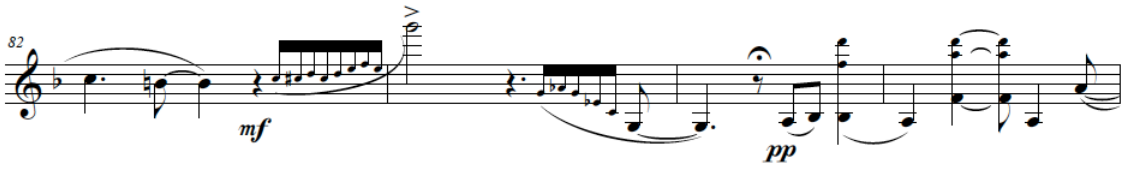

Mm. 70–73 contain a potentially difficult and exposed passage (Example 29). Making these wide leaps perfectly smooth can be tricky. I recommend playing with a fuller sound on the first eighth notes of beats two and four of mm. 70 and 71, notes F#, G#, A, and B. This will allow the higher notes to be a result of the fuller sounding lower eighth notes. I would also recommend using fingerings with fewer fingers down for the altissimo notes, for example RT-2-|--$_{B}$-$_{G\#}$ or RT12-|$_{4}$---$_{G\#}$ for the altissimo F#s and RT--3|1--$_{G\#}$ or RT---|1--$_{G\#}$ for the altissimo G#. These altissimo fingerings are usually easier to slur and their colors are easier to blend with the qualities of the lower notes.

**Example 29: Wide leaps before cadenza**



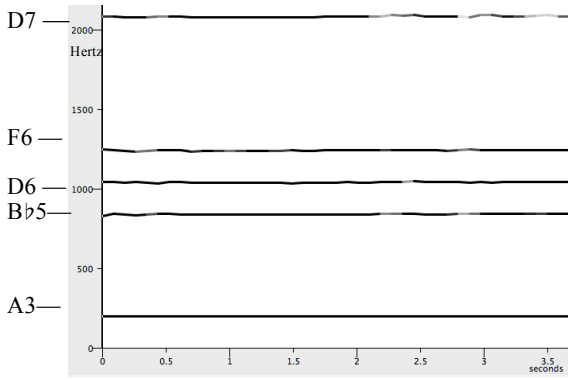
The clarinet cadenza contains two elements that are worth noting: the *pianissimo* multiphonics starting at m. 84 (Example 30), and the leap in m. 97 from a low A to an altissimo E (Example 33).

**Example 30: Multiphonics**



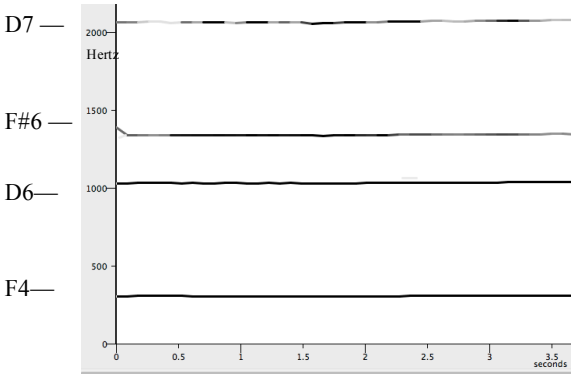

I recommend playing the multiphonic in m. 84 using the following fingering: T123|1-$3_F$; with this fingering it is possible to get close to the printed pitches of B♭, F and D. The sound analysis done with Spear software showed five prominent frequencies resulting from this fingering: A3, B♭5, D6, F6 and D7 (Example 31), all notated in B♭. With this fingering the low B♭ goes down in pitch and it was analyzed by Spear as a A3; also the F6 can only be heard an octave higher than printed.

**Example 31: Spear analysis of the B♭ multiphonic (pitches in B♭)**




The multiphonic in m. 85 can be played using 123|13$_{G\#}$. The Spear analysis showed four prominent frequencies resulting from this fingering: F4, D6, F#6 and D7, also notated in B♭ (Example 32) Both printed F4 and D6 are produced successfully, yet the A5 in the score is not found in the sound analysis of this multiphonic.

**Example 32: Spear analysis of F multiphonic (pitches in B♭)**

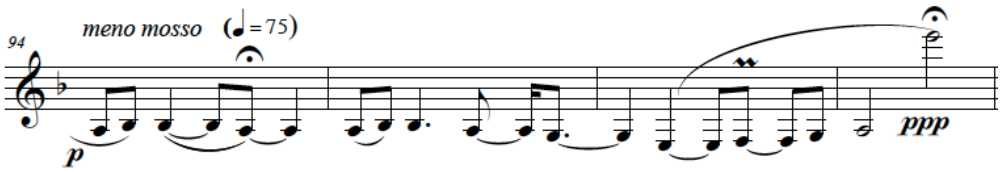


It is important to note that with any given multiphonic fingering the resulting pitches can be different depending on how it is executed. The Spear analyses show my best attempt to reproduce the printed chords. The player should focus on trying to produce the lower notes B♭3 and F4 and the altissimo D6s, attempting to match the tuning of the two Ds, without worrying too much about the other possible frequencies produced by this fingering.

The multiphonics are meant to embellish the main motive of the cadenza. For this reason they should be played subtly—very softly and trying to make all sounds in the chord equal. I find that voicing the D6 and having a powerful air stream for the *pianissimo* dynamic will help produce all the pitches in the multiphonics.

Finally, the end of the clarinet cadenza (m. 97) presents a challenging leap from A3 to E6 (Example 33). The E6, marked *ppp*, should sound almost like a string harmonic. It is possible to create this effect with the regular fingering RT-23|---$_{G\#}$, but I would like to suggest using R123|---$_{G\#}$, because I believe it facilitates the production of a *ppp* harmonic-like E.

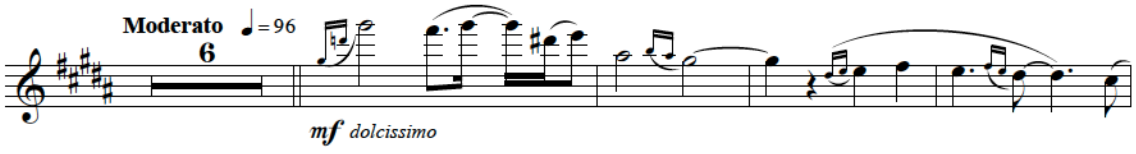
**Example 33: Leap to *ppp* E6**



***Hedonismo se escribe con H***

The main challenge in the second movement is found in the high number of difficult leaps in a legato context. This movement truly tests the clarinetist's ability to produce beautiful legato phrases through a series of wide intervals. The challenge begins with the first clarinet entrance at m. 7 (Example 34). The difficulty of this entrance is affected by two primary factors. First the leap itself; it is not easy to gracefully slur from a high G#5 to an altissimo G#6 going through an altissimo D6. Second, it is a very exposed entrance only accompanied by the piano in a soft dynamic. This entrance was originally marked *mp*, but, after telling Escalante that I was going to put *mf* in my music to give myself a better chance of accomplishing the leap, he changed the dynamic from *mp* to *mf*. The truth is that its volume is not as important as its character. Escalante marked this entrance *dolcissimo*, meaning very sweetly. Playing it sweetly should be the main concern, which is also not an easy task. I recommend using the fingering RT---|1--G# for the altissimo G# because it is very responsive and easy to slur from a regular high D (RT-23|1--$_{G\#}$). Also, it is possible to leave the left hand 3$^{rd}$ finger for the G#6, in case the pitch needs to be lowered.

**Example 34: Clarinet second movement: first entrance**




I was temped to ask the composer to rewrite this leap at m. 7, but never did. After studying the piece I felt this leap made the movement more meaningful. If the first

movement represents the first meeting or conversation between two people, the *attacca* second movement proposes a progression of their relationship to a more intimate level. Suddenly this leap became a symbol in my mind. It became the "leap of faith" manifested by the clarinet as it decides to trust the orchestra before joining it in an intimate dance. The entrance is difficult and leaps of faith are too, therefore changing m. 7 into something else didn't seem right. The passage is challenging but playable, and just as in life you prepare and hope for the best!

There are many other leaps in the second movement that demand careful attention, but none more challenging than the opening leap at m. 7.

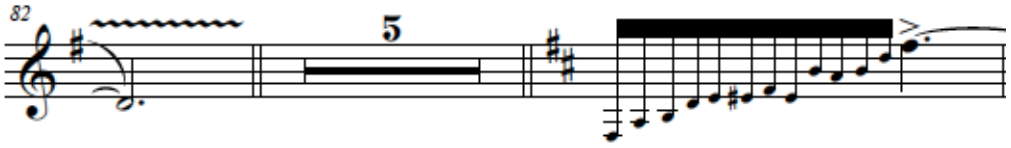
***El Circo***

In this movement the variety of articulations and gestures should be carefully considered, accents in particular. Accents are used in this movement to strengthen big arrivals, embellish or emphasize notes, and to show syncopations. Not every accent is played in the same way. Depending on the context some are sharper with quicker decays (Theme 2, Ex. 26), more aggressive (T1 where *sfz* are found) or weightier, as in T3 where they appear with legato lines. The proper differentiation of these accents is very important and will affect the different intended character of each passage. The clarinetist should try to bring out these differences.

There is one passage in this movement that requires extra attention, m. 88 (Example 35). This anacrusis solo line in the clarinet is fast and articulated. My recommendation is to double-tongue the entire passage, starting at a lesser dynamic and

increasing the dynamic towards the accented F#5. Also, leaning on the F#4 can help make this passage more even by feeling it in two parts of six thirty-second notes.

**Example 35: Double tonguing passage m. 88**




All my performance recommendations are designed to help the clarinetist express with ease the variety of elements present in this concerto. The ultimate goal should be to produce a compelling performance that not only pays close attention to detail, but that also shows an understanding of this. The strong Latin American influences and programmatic elements present in the concerto invite the clarinetist to be an expressive storyteller, and like a painter, to use all of his/her colors to produce the most beautiful of pictures.

# CONCLUSION

What I love about Escalante's compositional approach is that he is always looking to tell a story. His love for theater, and composing the music for the story, goes beyond the dance and theater stage into the concert hall. His titles allude to a variety of different topics that are most of the time inherently related to the construction of the piece. Some pieces are completely programmatic like *De garuas, aguaceros y escampes*, others like the clarinet concerto have implied ideas and meanings underlying the musical lines.

As a performer I completely identify with Carlos Escalante, because I also feel that music should tell stories. I personally actively search for musical stories to share with my audience, and for this reason I found my experience of working with Carlos Escalante most rewarding.

Escalante's mixed musical language allows him to express his ideas clearly to a wide audience. My analysis of his concerto uncovers the elements he used to produce this unified and expressive music, where traditional forms function as loose guidelines for a combination of Latin American rhythms, tonal harmonies, singing melodies, and a driving beat. His broad compositional knowledge and blending of styles ultimately serves the expression above all.

I hope to have accomplished my goal of placing Carlos Escalante and his music in a historical context, as well as providing a clear analysis of his Concerto for Clarinet and Strings. I hope this document will be helpful for future studies of Latin American music and that it helps future clarinetists better prepare for a possible performance of this concerto.

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## APPENDIX 1
## CONVERSATION WITH CARLOS ESCALANTE MACAYA

The conversation took place August 12, 2013 at the composer's home in Montelimar, San José, Costa Rica over coffee. I include here some of the most important commentaries.

Interviewer: Ana Catalina Ramírez Castrillo (ACR)

Interviewee: Carlos Escalante Macaya (CEM)

**ACR: How did the idea to compose a clarinet concerto arise?**

**CEM:** The concerto for clarinet and strings is my first concerto, the first work I write for a soloist and orchestra. I wanted to write a solo concerto and obviously when one thinks about that the first question is, for which instrument? So I said, I would prefer to write a concerto for someone who is pursuing a career as a soloist, because even though there are many great players that are very good soloists, if the player is not pursuing a career as a soloist then the player premieres the concerto and goes back to let's say the first violin section and that is it. I needed someone who was working on his or her solo career, even better an international solo career, so that he or she could play the concerto more than one time, several times and add it to his or her repertoire list. So amongst the Costa Rican musicians that were pursuing a solo career abroad the one person with whom I had the most confidence was with you, not that I had a lot of it but at least enough to be able to talk about working on a project together. I knew that we would probably have to work on some project before, and you said to me: "I am looking for pieces for solo clarinet for a tour in Panama," and I said to myself, well, we are going to work on that.

**ACR: What was your compositional approach?**

**CEM:** Well it is very difficult to say. The process of composition has to do with finding the story one wants to tell. So, lets say that when one writes music for dance or theater it is a lot easier because there is a director, and there is a story. For me writing music for theater means writing the music of the play, not whatever I want. So, the more years I spent writing music for dance and theater the harder it was to write lets say formal music, music that did not have scenic elements.

So I started to compose programmatic music. When you asked me for a piece for solo clarinet I only thought about Federico Fellini movies. If one is thinking about using Fellini's movies for inspiration, the music of Nino Rota is definitely a very important

reference; also music is a very important element in his movies. The Ricercare for solo clarinet is the second piece I wrote thinking about the movies of Fellini. The first one was a piece for saxophone, vibraphone and glockenspiel that I wrote for a student of mine. Once I find the story everything flows.

In the case of the clarinet concerto the first thing I did was study previous clarinet concertos. I started with the concertos from the 18th century. They are all horrible even Mozart's. Weber: ugly, Spohr, the four he has: ugly, and Mozart is kind of ugly considering the beautiful things he wrote.

Then I arrived to the 20th century. I heard Copland's and I said ooooohh what a difference. This is truly wonderful music, and from the Copland concerto there was one thing that really caught my attention. I heard Sharon Kam's version and I said to myself this concerto is very feminine. I can't imagine Benny Goodman playing this. The slow movement is very subtle. It reminds me of the music of women composers from the baroque, that even though they are baroque they don't try to start ostentatiously, you understand? They introduce you subtly into the discourse. I thought, I am writing this concerto for a woman and I want it to have that same element of subtlety, and not to start aggressively trying to impress, but start subtly and to keep developing just as in the Copland concerto.

For the second movement I wanted to do something different. You tell me and Juan Trigos the Mexican composer tells me, and many others tell me that the first movement is tango-like. I had absolutely no intention of doing that; actually I thought it had turned out sounding far from Latin American. I said to myself, this turned out kind of John Adams, because of the rhythm in the basses. If the first movement probably turned out very American minimalist then I must make a second movement that is much more Latin American, and since it is the slow movement I said let's make a bolero. So I did my research. I started to look for scores of boleros I liked like "Lágrimas Negras" for example and study the type of harmony and progressions they had. So, when I started to write, the material dictated the rhythm and tempo that it had to have, and I said this is not exactly a bolero. At that point one day I asked Bernardo Quesada, who is a popular musician educated at "el Castella" and the National Institute of Music, what is this? That because of the accent it has is a *danzón*, he told me. It wasn't intentional; simply a *danzón* came out, because all these genres are very close to each other, many times it is just a matter of tempo. If you are under eighth note equal 60 it is a bolero, if you are above then it is something else. Even the Cuban son and bolero are very close to each other.

In the third movement I wanted to go deeper into the circus music or into the music of Fellini movies. I wanted to go deeper into music and wanted to try to take advantage of the same things Nino Rota does in Fellini's movies which is to use the concept of the circus to allow flexibility of discourse, because once you have the framework of circus, well, anything can happen: flying people, eating swords, women with horns…you can include whatever you want and it is going to make sense, because the circus is naturally eclectic, supernatural and surreal. Therefore, the third movement is based on the Fellini movies. Interestingly enough they are not movies that directly refer to the circus, especially 8 ½, that one has no relation with it but the element of the circus still appears… they are black and white movies from around 1960s.

**ACR: How did you come up with the titles for the movements?**

The story behind "Hedonismo empieza con H" is such a stupid thing, just as me writing hedonism without "h" in a history class. There is also a Spanish play called "Amor se escribe con A" (Love is written with L). My students corrected me and it was quite embarrassing. The history professor gives a spiel about hedonism, writes the word on the board, and writes it wrong. And I don't believe I am a bad speller, so that was a title that I pulled out of my sleeve.

Mamihlapinatapai was a word I found on the internet and that I thought had a wonderful meaning. It said it was one of the most difficult words to translate. It is the situation that takes place between two people who have lots of things to say to each other yet neither says anything. If you listen to the first movement of the concerto it is a conversation in which they are saying: Is it ok what we are doing? And the clarinet answers yes it is ok because I am doing something similar, and the orchestra says, what you are doing makes sense, something good could come out of this. It is as if the clarinetist would have brought his/her ideas and the orchestra its ideas and they have to make a movement together. If you notice the melodies in the orchestra are almost never shared by the clarinet and vice versa. This creates the effect that the clarinet proposes a statement to the orchestra and the orchestra says yes, this could work but listen to this. The final result is that it doesn't sound like something predetermined, it sounds as if they were getting to know each other, as if they were having their first conversation, which works great as a first movement for me.

**ACR: You spend a lot of time composing many different things all year. You have to compose for dance, for theater, movies… how many do you compose for these specific genres?**

**CEM:** Usually I have around four commissions a year only for theater. In dance what happened is that my adored wife Isabel has taken a lot of work from me… She's a professional dancer / composer…

**ACR: Which is your favorite composition genre?**

**CEM:** I feel most comfortable with the scenic. When I talk about "scenic" I talk about both dance and theater. It has a lot to do with feeling valued, with feeling indispensable. In classical music you don't always feel indispensable. In my case though, I do feel appreciated because after the age of 40 one feels as if they were trying to take care of you. I don't have to convince the orchestra any more to commission works from me; I can compose a work and sell it to them. So in classical music I feel valued, but if I write my next work or don't, it makes no difference; meanwhile in theater it is a different story. In theater there is a director that says "I am going to do King Lear and I need the costume designer and I need Carlos Escalante to be available to do this production." There are a lot of things that converge; many designers and creators—the choreographer, the director, the actor that is creating a character, the light designer, the composer—and if one can tolerate to be part of this team then it is very comforting, because you feel indispensable.

For many years I didn't have competition writing music for theater and dance because the majority of classical composers hate to work for these media. They can't tolerate a choreographer telling them what to do. They don't like to have limitations; they can't stand writing the music the work requires or the director needs. The composer wants to write whatever he wants and the director wants him to write what he needs.

**ACR:** Since you enjoy composing for the stage so much then, why write academic music?

**CEM:** because one has to have open doors and learn to enjoy the different genres, for the simple reason that one can't always be in vogue. One can't be the popular composer all his life. So I always thought that there would be a time when young dancers would be less interested in my music and I hope that when that happens there will be other people interested in my music… open doors… also, if one only does one thing then one doesn't learn as much as if one does many different things.

**ACR: after this experience, would you compose another clarinet concerto?**

**CEM:** Well, I would have to think about it. Of course once you write a concerto for an instrument you are left with the desire to write a second to do the things that you didn't do, and to avoid those you shouldn't have done—to avoid the same mistakes and lets say utilize other instrumental resources that were not known at the time. I think I would write a second clarinet concerto maybe after the cello concerto and the piano concerto, maybe then I would write the clarinet concerto No. 2.

**ACR: Do you have a favorite amongst your compositions?**

**CEM:** Yes, I have several favorite works. One of my favorites is definitely the clarinet concerto, but it has generated many discussions with Isabel, because I think it is the best work I have written but also the most conventional.

**ACR:** What is the problem with that?

**CEM:** Well that it doesn't incorporate anything new that it is not "ground breaking."

**ACR:** There is nothing wrong with that.

**CEM:** Well in some circles that is unforgivable. Like Juan Trigos says, he says it jokingly "what a beautiful concerto, it is a shame it is tonal." Of course he says this jokingly, because I've known Juan since 1996, and he is someone I can joke around with, but those jokes always have a hidden truth.

For example, I gave up the idea of participating in festivals of contemporary music because my music has nothing to do in contemporary music festival, because it is closer to other genres such as popular music, music for the theater, film or dance. I love contemporary languages, maybe I am not too radical in my choice of language, but I am not radical because there are certain things I don't want to lose. I don't want the meaning to be lost because of the use of a complex language. It is as if a poet had to write in Esperanto because that is in vogue, and you say yeah but there are important things I want to say with my poems, to say them in Esperanto so that only linguists can understand what I'm saying. Likewise, there are very important things I want to say with my music and I don't want only people like Juan Trigos and Eddy Mora to understand what I am saying. I want young people to understand. I want the young student who dreams about being a composer to understand what I am saying, so that he doesn't think: "if that is what I have to write then I don't want to be a composer because it doesn't make

sense." Right now I have important things to say and I sacrifice the language in order to have a clear message. Today the second movement of the concerto was recorded and I got goose bumps. The day I can do that with a more avant-garde language, and I swear to you it can be done, because I can list a lot of composers that write things that give me goose bumps that use a very avant-garde language.

**ACR:** like who?

**CEM:** A Finnish composer Aulis Sallinen, Jennifer Higdon and her concerto for violin…

**ACR:** but Jennifer Higdon's language is also very influenced by popular music, in her case American. So? You tell me you don't like to participate in contemporary music festivals but that is what is going on, many things are being combined…

**CEM:** If I had a language like Higdon's for example, I would love to participate in contemporary music concerts.

**ACR:** my point is that your language is not as different from hers; it simply has different influences.

**CEM:** Yes it could be, not in the case of the clarinet concerto, but in other works yes. If you can move people through music, and I am talking not the musically learned or the academic, if you can move the common man with music, then the language you use is of very little importance.

## APPENDIX 2
## CONVERSACIÓN CON CARLOS ESCALANTE

La conversación se dió el 12 de Agosto del 2013 en la casa del compositor en Montelimar, San José, Costa Rica durante la hora del café. Incluyo aquí algunos de los comentarios más importantes.

Entrevistardor: Ana Catalina Ramírez Castrillo (ACR)
Entrevistado: Carlos Escalante Macaya (CEM)

**ACR: ¿De donde nace la idea de componer un concierto para clarinete?**

**CEM**: El concierto para clarinete y cuerdas es mi primer concierto, la primera obra que escribo para solista y orquesta. Yo quería escribir un concierto solista, y obviamente cuando uno se plantea eso la primera pregunta es, ¿para que instrumento? Entonces yo dije, yo preferiría escribir un concierto para alguien que esté haciendo carrera como solista, porque aunque hay instrumentistas muy buenos, que son muy buenos solistas, si el instrumentista no está haciendo carrera como solista el instrumentista estrena el concierto y se vuelve a sentar en la fila de digamos, primeros violines y ya, eso fué. Yo necesitaba alguien que estuviera haciendo carrera de solista, ojalá una carrera internacional como solista para que no tocara el concierto una sola vez, para que lo tocara varias veces y para que lo usara como parte de su repertorio de concierto. Entre los músicos costarricenses que estaban haciendo carrera como solista en el extranjero la persona con la que tenía más confianza era con vos, que no tenía tampoco mucha confianza pero digamos la suficiente como para hablar y hacer proyectos juntos. Yo sabía que probablemente tendríamos que hacer algún proyecto antes, y vos me dijiste "estoy buscando piezas para clarinete solo porque tengo la gira a Panamá," y yo digo bueno, vamos a trabajar en eso.

**ACR: ¿Cúal fué su proceso de composición?**

**CEM:** Diay es muy difícil decir. El proceso de composición tiene que ver con buscar la historia que uno quiere contar. Entonces, digamos cuando uno escribe música para danza o para teatro es mucho más fácil porque ya hay un director, y ya hay una historia. Para mi escribir música para teatro significa escribir la música de la obra, no escribir lo que yo quiera. Entonces, entre más años pasé escribiendo música para danza y teatro más difícil me era escribir música digamos formal, que no tuviera un elemento escénico.

Entonces empecé a escribir música programática. Cuando vos me pediste la pieza para clarinete solo pensé en las películas de Federico Fellini. Indudablemente si estás pensando en inspirarte en las películas de Fellini, la música de Nino Rota es un elemento muy importante, además que la música en las películas de este señor es importantísima. El Ricercare para clarinete fue la segunda obra que hice pensando en las películas de

Fellini. La primera es una pieza para saxofón vibráfono y glockenspiel que escribí para una alumna. Una vez que encuentro la historia ya la cosa va sobre ruedas.

En el caso del concierto para clarinete lo que hice primero fué revisar otros conciertos para clarinete. Primero pasé por todos los concierto del siglo XVIII. Son horribles todos, hasta el de Mozart. Weber: feo, Spohr: los 4 que tiene feos, el de Mozart es feito para las cosas tan hermosas que escribió Mozart.

Luego llegué al siglo XX, oí el de Copland y dije aaaaah que diferencia. Eso si es una maravilla de música, y del concierto de Copland una cosa me llamó mucho la atención. Lo escuché con Sharon Kam, y yo dije: este concierto es un concierto muy femenino. Yo no me puedo imaginar a Benny Goodman tocando esto. El movimiento lento es un movimiento tán sutil que me recuerda mucho la música de las mujeres compositoras del baroco, que pese a ser barrocas no tratan de entrar presumiendo, entendes? Te introducen sutilmente en el discurso. Yo pensé: le estoy escribiendo este concierto a una mujer, y yo quiero que también tenga ese elemento como de sutileza, que no empiece como agresivamente impresionando, sino que empiece sutilmente y que fuera desarrollando y desarrollando como en el concierto de Copland.

Luego para el segundo movimiento yo quería hacer algo diferente. Vos me decís y muchos me dicen, Juan Trigos el compositor mexicano, que el primero es medio tangueado, vieras que no tuve absolutamente ninguna intensión, de hecho yo pensé que me había quedo muy poco latinoamericano. Yo dije, esto me quedó muy John Adams, por el ritmo que tienen los bajos. Si el primer movimiento me quedó probablemente muy minimalista gringo entonces tengo que hacer un segundo movimiento mucho más latinoamericano, y como es el movimiento lento yo dije: hagamos un bolero. Entonces hice otra vez “research”. Empecé a buscar los scores de boleros que a mi me gustaban mucho como Lagrimas Negras por ejemplo, para estudiar el cifrado armónico y para ver el tipo de armonía que tienen y el tipo de progresiones. Entonces, a la hora de ponerme a escribir el material dictó el ritmo y el tempo que tenía que tener, y yo dije esto no es exactamente un bolero. Un día le puse los audífonos a Bernardo Quesada, que es un músico popular formado en el Castella y en el Instituto Nacional de Música, y le dije ¿esto que es?… eso por el acento que tiene es un danzón, me dijo. No fué algo intencional simplemente salió un danzón, porque todas esas formas están muy relacionadas, muchas veces es un asunto de tempo nada mas. Por ejemplo: si es por debajo de negra igual 60 es un bolero si es por encima es otra cosa, inclusive el son cubano y el bolero están muy relacionados entre si.

En el tercer movimiento yo quería profundizar más en la música de circo o en la música de las películas de Fellini. Yo quería tratar de sacar provecho de lo mismo que hace Nino Rota en las películas de Fellini que es utilizar la idea del circo para que te permita flexibilidad de discurso, porque una vez que usted tiene el marco del circo diay cualquier cosa puede pasar: gente volando, gente que traga espadas, mujeres cornudas, usted puede meter lo que le dé la gana y va a tener lógica porque el circo es ecléctico, surrealista y sobrenatural por naturaleza. Entonces el tercer movimiento está basado en las películas de Fellini. Curiosamente no son películas que tengan que ver directamente con el circo,

sobre todo 8 ½, no tiene que ver directamente con el circo pero ahí aparece el elemento del circo. .. son películas en blanco y negro como del 60 y pico.

**ACR: ¿De donde salieron los títulos de los movimientos?**

**CEM**: En el caso de Hedonismo empieza con H es una cosa tan estúpida como que un día escribí hedonismo sin H en una clase de historia. Y hay una obra de teatro española que se llama "Amor se escribe con A" y me acuerdo que mis estudiantes me corrigieron, y yo dije que vergüenza, el profesor de historia se hecha un discurso sobre el concepto del hedonismo lo escribe en la pizarra y los escribe mal. Y yo no creo tener tan mala ortografía, entonces ese si fue un titulo medio sacado de la manga.

Mamihlapinatapia fue una palabra que me encontré en internet y que me pareció maravilloso su significado. Decía que era una de las palabras más difíciles de traducir. Es la situación que se dá entre dos personas que tienen cosas tan importantes que decirse que no dicen nada. El primer movimiento es un dialogo entre la orquesta y el clarinete. Si vos escuchas el primer movimiento del concierto es un dialogo como que está diciendo: esto que estamos haciendo ¿esta bien? Y el clarinete dice sí, está bien, porque yo estoy haciendo algo parecido, eso también está bien, y la orquesta dice sí, tiene sentido lo que estas haciendo, como que puede salir algo bueno de aquí. Pero es como que si el clarinetista hubiera llevado sus ideas y la orquesta las suyas y tienen que hacer un movimiento juntos. Si te das cuenta las melodías de la orquesta no las tiene el clarinete y las melodías del clarinete no las tiene la orquesta. Eso produce el efecto de cómo que vos le proponés a la orquesta y la orquesta dice "sí, puede ser pero oí esto…". Lo que finalmente resulta es que no suena como algo que ya esta predeterminado, suena como si se estuvieran conociendo, suena como que si estuvieran entablando un primer dialogo entre si, lo cual a mi me funciona mucho como primer movimiento.

**ACR: Usted pasa componiendo un montón de cosas diferentes todo el año, tiene que crear obras para danza, para teatro, y películas… ¿cuántas son para estos medios específicos?**

**CEM**: Pueden ser unas cuatro al año solo en teatro. En danza lo que pasa es que mi queridísima esposa Isabel me ha quitado mucho trabajo… ella es de los bailarines profesionales /compositores.

**ACR: ¿Cuál es su medio de composición favorito?**

**CEM**: Yo me siento muy cómodo en lo escénico. Por "escénico" me refiero a la danza y el teatro. Tiene que ver mucho con no solo sentirse valorado sino sentirse indispensable. En la música clásica uno no siempre se siente indispensable. Aunque debo admitir que yo me siento valorado, porque después de los 40 años uno siente como que están tratando de chinearlo a uno. Ya no tengo que convencer a la orquesta de que me comisione una obra; puedo escribir una obra y vendérsela a la orquesta. Entonces en la música clásica me siento valorado, pero si no escribo mi próxima obra o si la escribo no hace mayor diferencia mientras que en teatro es diferente. En el teatro hay un director que dice bueno voy a hacer el Rey Lear, y necesito que el vestuarista este libre y necesito que Carlos Escalante este disponible para hacer este montaje. Son un montón de cosas que se

conjugan, un montón de diseñadores y creadores—el escenógrafo, el director, el actor que está creando un personaje, el diseñador de luces, el compositor—y si uno puede tolerar el ser parte de un trabajo en equipo es muy reconfortante, porque te sentís indispensable.

Yo durante muchos años no tuve competencia escribiendo para teatro y para danza porque la mayoría de compositores clásicos detestan trabajar para teatro y danza. No soportan que un director o un coreógrafo les diga lo que tienen que hacer. No soportan tener limitaciones, tampoco soportan escribir la música que necesita la obra o necesita el director. El compositor quiere escribir lo que le da la gana y el director quiere que escriba lo que él necesita.

**ACR: Como le gusta tanto escribir música para teatro entonces ¿para qué escribir música académica?**

**CEM**: Porque uno tiene que tener opciones abiertas y aprender a disfrutar las diferentes ramas, además, por una sencilla razón: uno no puede estar de moda todo el tiempo. Uno no puede ser el compositor vigente toda la vida. Entonces yo siempre pensé, bueno va a haber un momento en que los jovenes bailarines estén menos interesados en mi música y espero que cuando ese momento llegue haya otra gente interesada en mi música.. puertas abiertas… también, si uno hace una sola cosa no aprende tanto como que si uno hace muchas cosas diferentes.

**ACR: después de esta experiencia, ¿usted compondría otro concierto para clarinete?**

**CEM**: Bueno, tendría que pensarlo. Por supuesto que una vez que uno compone un concierto para un instrumento uno tiene ganas de escribir un segundo para hacer las cosas que no hizo y no hacer las que no debió haber hecho—no cometer los mismo errores y digamos utilizar otros recursos del instrumento que uno no conocía en le momento que escribió el concierto. Yo pienso que yo escribiría un segundo concierto para clarinete tal ves después del concierto para cello, y del concierto para piano, entonces talvez el concierto para clarinete No. 2.

**ACR: ¿De sus composiciones tiene una obra favorita?**

**CEM**: Sí, tengo varias obras favoritas. Una de mis obras favoritas definitivamente es el concierto para clarinete, pero ha suscitado muchas discusiones digamos con Isabel, porque yo pienso el concierto para clarinete es la mejor obra que he escrito pero también es la mas convencional.

**ACR**: ¿Cuál es el problema?

**CEM**: Bueno que no es una obra innovadora no es “ground breaking”.

**ACR**: Eso no tiene nada malo.

**CEM**: Bueno en algunos círculos eso es imperdonable. Como dice Juan Trigos que lo dice jodiendo, “ándale, que concierto mas bonito, lástima que es tonal.” Por supuesto que lo dice jodiendo porque a Juan lo conocí en el 96, es alguien que tiene confianza como

para hacerme bromas, pero esas bromas siempre tienen alguna verdad por detrás. Por ejemplo, yo desistí de participar en festivales de música contemporánea porque finalmente mi música no tiene nada que estar ahí porque esta más cercana a otras cosas, a la música popular, a la música incidental, la música para cine o a la música de danza. A mi me gustan muchísimo los lenguajes contemporáneos, talvez no soy muy radical en los lenguajes que uso, pero no soy muy radical porque hay ciertas cosas que no quiero perder. Yo no quiero que por usar un lenguaje demasiado contemporáneo lo que yo esté diciendo ya no se entienda, que el mensaje ya no se perciba. Es como si al poeta le dijeran: mirá ahora lo que está "in" es escribir en esperanto. Y uno dice mae sí, pero hay cosas importantes que yo quiero decir en mis poemas como para decirlas en esperanto y que solo los lingüistas entiendan lo que yo estoy diciendo. Hay cosas muy importantes que yo quiero decir con mi música como para que solo gente como Juan Trigos o Eddy Mora entienda lo que yo estoy diciendo. Yo quiero que me entienda por ejemplo la gente joven. Yo quiero que el mae que tiene 12 años y que sueña con ser compositor entienda lo que yo estoy diciendo, y que no piense: "ya no quiero ser compositor porque si eso es lo que hay que escribir, diay yo no entiendo". En este momento tengo cosas importantes que decir y sacrifico el lenguaje en pro de tener un mensaje claro. Hoy se grabó el segundo movimiento del concierto para clarinete y a mí se me erizó el pelo del brazo, el día que yo pueda hacer eso con un lenguaje avantgarde, porque te juro que se puede hacer, yo te puedo citar un montón de compositores que escriben cosas que a mí me erizan el pelo y son lenguajes réquete avantgarde.

**ACR:** ¿Cómo quien?

**CEM**: El compositor finlandés Aulis Sallinen, Jennifer Higdon con su concierto para violin…

**ACR:** pero el lenguaje de Jennifer Higdon también es muy influenciado por música popular, en este caso estadounidense. ¿Entonces?, usted me dice que no le gusta participar en festivales de música contemporánea, pero eso es lo que está pasando, las cosas se están fusionando…

**CEM**: Si yo tuviera un lenguaje como el de Higdon por ejemplo, me encantaría participar en conciertos de música contemporánea.

**ACR**: Mi punto es que su lenguaje no es tan distinto al de ella, simplemente son diferentes influencias.

**CEM**: Si, puede ser, no en el caso del concierto para clarinete pero en otras obras sí. Si usted puede a través de su música conmover a las personas, y cuando te digo las personas no al entendido en música ni al académico, si usted puede conmover con su música al hombre común, poco importa el lenguaje que estés usando.