

*Carnavalesque expressions in musical
composition:*

A Colombian perspective

Analytical Commentary

Vol. I

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ABSTRACT

The aim of my research is to reflect and exploit through a set of compositions certain musical features of Colombian folk music, which although difficult to incorporate in the language of Western Classical Music, can expand it in creative and productive ways. The outcome of this project is a folio with a set of compositions exploring, through different and innovative forms and sounds, the conflictive relationship between Colombian folk music and contemporary musical languages.

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4. *Chirimías metálicas* (2009) for solo flute Vol. V
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David Curtis (cond)

Chirimías metálicas (2009) for solo flute
Shanna Gutiérrez (fl)

Masks (2009) for mezzo-soprano and Bb clarinet
Helena Raeburn (mezzo),
Benjamin Graves (cl)

My Lonely Cumbia (2009) for seven instruments
Interrobang Ensemble,
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Murmillos Atómicos (2009) for large ensemble
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INTRODUCTION

To a considerable level, my work consists of reflection on my own cultural heritage. Accordingly, the main criterion in my selection of folk and popular repertoire for analytical purposes is the degree to which this type of music has nourished my musical and cultural background. Thus, the portfolio of thirteen collated pieces, together with the corresponding commentary, constitute a deep process of understanding both the folk/popular and the academic influences I have absorbed. This has involved musing on their meaning, analyzing their musical components and their aesthetic impact on my voice, transforming them in a creative way, remembering and forgetting them to some extent, and even ‘misunderstanding’ them in order to clear imaginative space for myself, to borrow from Harold Bloom’s reflections on poetry (Bloom, 1973).

Although I do not want to unequivocally define myself as a postmodern composer, there are some ways of thinking integral to this type of approach that fit the kind of exploration I am undertaking. This is the case with Richard Kearney’s remarks on the significance of Postmodernism:

Postmodernism is to be understood (...) not simply as that which comes *after* modernism, but as that which parodically reiterates our cultural traditions.

(Kearney, 1994, p. 21)

Additionally, Lyotard asserts that the meaning of the ‘post’ in postmodernism refers to “a process of ‘ana-’, *analysis*, *anamnesis*, *anagogy*, *anamorphosis*, which works out an ‘initial forgetting’” (Lyotard, 1986, p.125). In my experience, this idea of ‘initial forgetting’ has worked as a tendency to suspend modernist and – to a certain extent – academic judgements, and consequentially, as a willingness to allow ‘taboo’ elements, such as melodies and tonality, to enter my composition. At a certain point in my research, I decided to ‘forget’ the intricate and complex polyrhythmic textures, abstract and atonal pitch materials, fuzzy multi-metrics and eccentric graphical notations that had me stuck in the pretension of continuing an ‘avant-garde’ language that was novel forty years ago. I started to feel uncomfortable using a vocabulary that somehow reflected an attitude of permanent progress and novelty that is part of a tradition to which I did not feel I fully belonged. Additionally, I was taken by the impulse to include sounds from my childhood

in my music, to evoke and explore a time in which bourgeois and intellectual prejudices and aspirations had not formed. Somehow, I found myself feeling a little foreign to my own musical language. This was compounded by the feeling of being an actual foreigner in the UK, at a great geographical distance from my home country. I suppose I felt melancholic and an urge to be really truthful revealed itself.¹

However, the idea of ‘initial forgetting’ constituted merely a starting point in my project. Later on, it evolved into a keen interest in understanding two musical components of my life: the Classical and the Folk-Popular Colombian musical traditions, and in bringing them together in an imaginative way. The comprehension of these two types of influence demanded a deep observation and appreciation of their differences without adapting or absorbing one tradition into the other. The aim of this project is what I call a *problematization* of the musical features that inform the fascinating but abstruse relationship between Western classical music and Colombian folk and popular music. As I will explain in the following section, this conflicting but suggestive relationship is embodied in the notion of ‘carnavalesque’. The pieces of this portfolio are the expression of this reflection.

The following discussion presents (Chapter 1) a theoretical contextualisation of the relevance of the concept of carnival to my research, making a pertinent distinction between folk and popular music and different tendencies of inclusion of folk traditional elements into Classical languages. This chapter also elaborates on the concept of the problematisation of the relationship between folk traditions and Western contemporary languages and how I use it creatively in my compositional work. Chapter 2 will offer a descriptive analysis of the pieces of my portfolio on the basis of the aforementioned conceptual background.

¹ Harold Bloom offers an insightful reflection on the creative impulse of melancholy. He claims that the melancholy of poets is analogous to the anxiety of influence, which he defines as the fear to drown for lack of originality or talent in comparison with our precursors. However, poetic influence “always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually a necessary misinterpretation” (Bloom, 1973, p. 30).

I. GENERAL THEORETICAL CONTEXT

The relevance of the concept of Carnival to my research

Carnivals were originally intended to mark the beginning of the Christian Lent ritual and its command to reject the bodily aspect of human existence. The Latin term *carnem-levare* means “to remove one’s self (*levare*) from flesh or meat (*carnem*)” (Mauldin, 2004, p. 3). However, from the first manifestations of carnivals – which according to the oldest known written description dates back to the 12th-century – they were conceived as a farewell to the body, so ironically they amounted to a final celebration of the bodily existence that was at odds with their intended function. One of the main features of this celebration is its inversion of social hierarchies and roles (the town’s fool becomes king, men dress as women and vice versa). In this sense Ivanov observes that carnivals are moments in which “certain groups (or categories) of people, usually occupying an inferior position, exercise ritual authority over their superiors.” (Ivanov, 1984, p. 11) During the Middle Ages, as Bakhtin has pointed out, due to the assertion of hierarchies, moral values, norms and prohibitions, the carnival—the true feast of the people—had to be tolerated outside the official sphere and had to be turned over to the popular sphere of the low strata of the populus, represented in the marketplace (Bakhtin, 1984). However, carnivals cannot be understood as political manifestations with civic or militant functions. They are not meant to transform the socioeconomic conditions of the lower strata of the population. In this sense, Umberto Eco says that the concept of carnival is deeply influenced by the definition of comic. According to Eco, carnivals are paradigmatic situations in which we are momentarily suspended from social norms and rules.

By assuming a mask, everyone can behave like the animal-like characters of comedy. [But] the comic is only an instrument of social control and can never be a form of social criticism. (...) Our tension for the tragedy is mitigated by the ridiculization of the majesty of sorrow through the ridiculization of the zoomorphic little men. They are the mask through which we can pass over in laughter the difficulty of living.

(Eco, 1984, 11)

Although the notion of carnival refers to the specific festivities in which these aforementioned expressions take place, one can derive a broader notion of ‘carnavalesque’ that designates the spirit of any cultural expression celebrating the body and the unofficial, uncanonized, inverted relationships—and not only the actual traditional carnivals (Danow, 2004). In this sense, ‘carnival’ “can be used to describe a resistance to dominant discourses, or a playful, even subversive use of language” (Babin and Harrison, 1999, p. 136). I will use this conceptual form of the term in relation to musical expression. Several instances of folk and popular music are carnivalesque in this sense. In particular, I will exploit Colombian folk and popular music as a general source of musical materials, insofar as it carries its aforementioned spirit, even though some of this music is neither exclusively nor necessarily performed in Carnivals.

Folk and Popular music

It is not easy to find or tailor a completely satisfying definition of the notions of folk and popular music. In their ordinary use and even in their technical use there is a great deal of ambiguity and overlap between them. According to *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, the concept of folk has been widely developed and defined within different geographical locations and historical periods in the social construction of identity in relation to class, nation or ethnicity. From the first usage of the term to present times, ‘folk music’ has been used interchangeably with ‘traditional music’, as opposed to ‘art’ music and different from ‘popular’ music. The distinction between ‘folk’ and ‘popular’ is equivalent to the indigenous rural for the former and urban traditions for the latter. It also distinguishes between ‘community music making’ and music intended for mass dissemination or marketing. Additionally, folk music is neither produced by nor directed towards an intellectual minority. With this in mind, I will refer to folk music as a musical practice with old roots in the cultural heritage of a community, which remains in many respects relatively unchanged and thereby maintaining a certain roughness and lack of sophistication. Typically, the commercial factor plays a very limited role in this music. Therefore, under the term ‘folk music’ I will consider a repertoire that at least in its origins has this aesthetical motivation and whose ethnic musical roots are recognizable.

As for popular music, the *Oxford Companion to Popular Music* states that it is a type of music “in relation to the understanding, taste, or means of ordinary people”, with a high level of activity (continuous production, reproduction, massive distribution, etc.). For the purpose of this chapter, I will follow this definition but I will only consider a specific type of Colombian popular music, which has its roots in folk music and is not influenced by the modern genres usually associated with the label ‘popular music’ in Europe and North America. I intend to explain this further when I present the particular folk or popular elements I am using in my own compositions.

The development of classical music has always been associated to the practice of folk music. In this regard, the inclusion of folk musical elements into Western classical music has always occurred. However, particularly during the last and current centuries this integration has taken very varied forms. Let me distinguish roughly between these two general tendencies. Whilst there are bound to be cases that do not fit entirely within either tendency, these categories can provide a useful framework for the ensuing discussion.

Adapting folk traditional elements into Classical language

The first tendency is characterized by the fact that the integration of folk music into the classical language operates by “adapting” folk traditional elements so that they fit into the pitch-tempered system and traditional Western rhythmic parameters. In this way, the folk tradition is smoothly absorbed into the language of classical music, where it can function as a very rich source of inspiration and exotic originality, sometimes contributing to the exploration of harmony, timbre and rhythm—within certain boundaries. A remarkable historical example is Béla Bartók’s work, which masterfully turns “both diatonic and non diatonic folk modes of Eastern Europe into octatonic, whole-tone, and other abstract pitch constructions of contemporary art music” (Antokoletz, 2000, p. 5). In the case of Colombia, the nationalistic phenomenon of assimilation of folk traditional music into classical practice, together with the influence of European and North American neoclassicism, has been the source of several valuable compositions, such as *Sonatina Boyacense* (1935) by Antonio María Valencia, *Tres Ballets Criollos*, *Tríptico de Danzas para Orquesta Op. 78* (1941) by Guillermo Uribe Holguín,

Preludio y Danza Colombiana (1956) by Luis Carlos Figueroa, *Paráfrasis sobre un Bambuco Colombiano* (1984) by Blas Emilio Atehortúa and *Tumbaos* (2007) by Diego Vega, among many others.

In my view, however, this adaptation-based approach to folk music very often leaves aside important musical aspects of folk music, associated with the idiosyncrasies of its performance and the affective palette that constitutes its expressive possibilities. When the two traditions, classical and folk, are compared, bearing in mind aspects such as the location or spaces of performance, the attitude expected from listeners and performers, the process of their creation and preservation, usually a set of dichotomies emerges: levity vs. seriousness, spontaneity vs. control, improvisation vs. predetermination, collective creation vs. individual composition, and, especially, total or partial absence of notation vs. detailed notation.

The role of notation in the creation and preservation of music is a very important aspect of reflection for my research. As Trevor Wishart (1996) has pointed out, the sole mnemonic function of musical notation is no longer its primary reason of existence. Instead, the restrictions of its limited symbols and constructions have predetermined the nature of the prevailing musical languages and ideas. This is undoubtedly associated with the fact that the primary parameters in musical organisation have consistently been pitch and duration, which appeared most accessible to analytic assimilation. Consequently, this approach to musical notation has left fundamental aspects of sound experience out of the score and, therefore, out of the musical work. Wishart actually compares the musical context with the history of human thought and communication, which “has been inextricably bound up with the use of the written word” (1996, p. 11). Furthermore, he asserts that some of the most important divisions of society are related to the institution of writing:

In the long era of scribbery, all people regarding themselves as ‘cultured’ or ‘civilised’, as opposed to illiterate peasants or craftsmen, have lived within the confines of an enormous library whose volumes have laid down what was socially acceptable and, in effect, possible to know and to mean. Whilst those lying on the margins of ‘civilisations’ retain some subcultural independence – variously labelled as ‘ignorance’, ‘backwardness’, ‘superstition’, ‘folklore’ or ‘folkculture’ – they equally had no access to the pages of history, and hence whatever the significance of their cultural world, it was devalued by default.

(Wishart, 1996, p. 12)

It has been common practice in the musical academic sphere to view folk and popular

musics as technically limited modes of music-making, and in some cases this has been accompanied by the implication of an inferior moral position.² In this sense, much of what Mikhail Bakhtin has shown regarding the relation between the official ‘high culture’ and the popular folk low strata since the Middle Ages, is also valid for the corresponding musical genres. I find it plausible that this social and moral hierarchy that writing carries has a strong connection with the way folk music has been incorporated into the work of many composers, and particularly the aforementioned Colombian composers whose work involves certain ‘adaptations’ of one genre to another. Here the presence of folk materials comes in the form of dances from the Andean region of the country (*Pasillo* and *Bambuco* dances), predominantly. Although the music from this region still preserves its indigenous content, it has a very strong Spanish influence and has acquired a great level of refinement. As a matter of fact, it is very common to find transcriptions and compositions for piano in these genres, as I will later explain further. For composers from the urban areas who are educated in conservatoires – such as the aforementioned composers³ – this fact plays an important role in the process of becoming familiar with national folk traditions. Commonly, the potential sonic possibilities of these overlooked genres are less likely to be preserved in the integration process of the composition, and parameters such as pitch and duration turn out to be the most distinctive features to be considered, which are already adjusted to the tempered system of the piano. Other more raw and less European-influenced types of popular music have been less accessible at the level of classical musical training, partly as a consequence of geographical, ethnic and historical circumstances, as will be discussed later on.

² This tendency has receded significantly in the last decades, but it is still far from disappearing.

³ It is worth noticing that the composers I am considering in this interpretation are established figures in the musical field. But there is a more recent trend that draws heavily on the folk repertoire from a different perspective, which, to some extent can be said to share similarities with mine. However, most of this new work belongs to popular genres such as jazz and rock fusions, which is partly the reason why they are not included in my reflection that primarily relates to the tradition of contemporary classical music. Nevertheless, there is a paradigmatic case, Colombian composer Eblis Alvarez, whose music could hardly be classified in any popular genre. Alvarez is a very influential figure in the contemporary scene of experimental popular music in Colombia, although some of his work is also part of the contemporary classical music repertoire. In fact he received a classical training as a composer and as a classical guitarist. His music is a constant dialogue between electro-acoustic media, *vallenato* (an originally folk genre from the Colombian Atlantic Coast region that has become very popular and a mass consumer product) and surrealistic poetry.

Problematisation of the relationship between folk traditions and avant-garde languages

Although the adaptation-based approach has played a very important role in the integration of folk music into classical music worldwide (not only in Colombia), there are other significant ways in which such a process has taken place. In many cases the integration of the popular folk tradition into the Classical has taken the form of what I would like to call a *problematisation* of their relation. “To problematise” strictly means to consider something as if it were a problem: a difficulty that has to be resolved or dealt with. Michel Foucault used the term “reflective problematisation” to refer to the phenomenon in which the subject “stands back” to consider him- or herself as an object of thought in order to understand his or her own nature. This would commonly entail a confrontation with a set of exterior objects and a practical transformation of the being of the subject concerned (Han, 2002). Accordingly, the phenomenon in which a representative of a musical tradition – particularly a composer – explores and confronts it with other traditions may be suitably described as *problematisation*. In the context of my research these traditions are Classical and Folk. The result of this operation is a work that makes the confrontation explicit by incorporating and exploring their differences and tensions in a musical and, to a certain extent, socio-cultural sense. The work sheds light on the nature of each tradition, without absorbing one into the other.

This is the case of Ecuadorian electro-acoustic composer Mesías Maiguashca, whose work deals with the political tensions regarding the legitimate place of indigenous populations in relation to the Spanish colonisation, as well as the dismissive attitude of Latin-American society towards the indigenous component of the *mestizo* race. Maiguashca’s music examines the sounds of Popular Ecuadorian and Latin-American society with timbral transformations, textural juxtapositions and complex sonic developments, usually assisted by technology. In *Ayayayay* (1971) he allows the presence of pre-recorded sounds of people in the marketplace, birds, insects, random conversations of people in the streets, folk peasant musicians, folk popular music from the radio, religious hymns, and general noise and distortion, among others. Maiguashca himself explains this piece by saying that he works “with the abstract sonic fabric of pre-recorded real sound as a general scene on top of which images of the daily life of our people appear; of a dirty and dark routine stuffed with alcohol and disillusion, under the

dominium of a false and cynical society.” (Maiguashca, 1971, my translation). Some of his most representative works are *El Oro* (1992), *El Negro Bombón* (2008), *Milonga de los Parciales* (2005) and *Reading Castañeda* (1993).

In relation to the Colombian cases I presented earlier, it is worth mentioning a very interesting exception, *Wayra* (1994) by Guillermo Carbó Ronderos, who has a wide-ranging career and experience not only as a composer but also as an ethnomusicologist, and who has also extensively manipulated electro-acoustic media. In this particular piece he explores and amplifies musical gestures of indigenous instrumental performance practice of the *quena* (pan flute), such as sharp attacks, microtonality, multiphonics, breathy sounds and modal scales, which he develops in a contemplative and thoughtful musical experience.

The above-mentioned Latin American cases do not exist in isolation. There are widely known precedents to this type of problematisation in music. Such is the case of the American composer Charles Ives. In some works he created his so-called ‘strata’ textures by combining literal popular quotes with original classical ideas. The result is an impression of uneasy coexistence, a collage of different moments, traditions and places. Ives explored spatial forms rather than temporal ones, involving “relationships that are simultaneous, reciprocal and reflective in nature rather than successive, sequential and unidirectional” (Morgan, 1977. p. 146). The result is a static structure of pictorial character that clearly conveys the awkwardness of the coexistence of those contrasting worlds. This is particularly evident in *Central Park in the Dark* (1906-09), *The Unanswered Question* (1906 rev. 1934) and *Three Places in New England* (1910-14 rev. 1929).

More recently, Luciano Berio implicitly questions the very limits of the popular and classic genres. Behind the presence of folk music in his repertoire, there is an interest in “searching for a unity underlying musical worlds that are apparently alien to one another” (Berio, 1985, p. 106). In *Coro* (1975-77), for instance, he includes folksongs from around the world (North America, Peru, Polynesia, Macedonia, Croatia, Persia, Yugoslavia). The result, however, is not an Ivesian collage but a place of “acoustical unity among different techniques and ways of making music” (Berio, 1985 p. 151), in which a complex textural assemblage of musical references may appear, disappear, pursue their divergent courses, cross paths, return, transform or hide. Berio does not intend to preserve the authenticity of the folk material that he turns to, as if paying

homage, but rather incorporates the material into his own language. He claims that “the best way to analyse and comment on a piece is to do something, using materials from that piece” (*ibid.* p. 107).

I am particularly interested in the way Berio recreates the different moods and intonations of pre-existing material, as he does in his *Folk Songs I* (1964) and *Voci (Folk Songs II)* (1984). In the first work the rawness and spontaneity of accentuations and singing of the original voices are not only recreated but also enriched with harmonic colours and strange timbres from contemporary techniques of orchestration. This piece is not a simple arrangement of the songs themselves and their features are not just adapted to Berio’s classical tradition. On the contrary, Berio creates a new expression, a magic space where bizarre, unknown and contemporary sounds converge with the authentic, emotional and spontaneous expression of popular folk traditional culture in music from different places of the world. *Voci* on the other hand, takes folk material from a single source, Sicily. Instead of using words or the original folk melodies, he is able to capture the gestures, fragments and emotional mood of the original performance, transforming it into his own. The general texture of the piece makes the song’s fragments float into the space between the two instrumental groups and the anxious and permanent percussion, which shadows the general discourse of the piece in a constant expressively edgy atmosphere. This gloomy flow recalls some of the advice violist Kim Kashkashian received from Sicilian viola player Aldo Bennici, who gave the first performances of the piece: "one of the things he said to me, kept trying to say over and over again in different ways, is that the Sicilian personality is highly touched by the degree of intense sunlight in the land, and that that produces actually a shadow side to the personality so that there is a constant preoccupation with death." (Berio, 2001, CD notes).

Regarding the presence of noise as a primary element of expression in combination with the folk evocations, I have considered the work of Helmut Lachenmann, particularly *Tanzsuite mit Deutschlandlied* (1970-80). This suite of dances is a very interesting exploration of the internal forces and the structural rhythmic shape of folk dances, which he orchestrates with an immense variety of extended techniques and ornamentations, making the melodic and rhythmic unities irrelevant. The ornamentations and the emphasis on the structural pulses of the rhythmic framework of

the dances become the main material to develop. This allows the composer to conceive and achieve, at some points, completely abstract, pointillist or even very dark sonic situations, which are absolutely not related to the dances, giving them a new perspective of poetic and expressive deterioration, corruption and indetermination. I have also explored the way Iannis Xenakis approached dense, massed textures and the control of chaotic conditions. I have particularly examined the way in which he departed from the classical sense of the dramatic and classical expressivity in many of his works (e. g. *Metastasis* (1953-4), *Persephassa* (1969), *N'Shima* (1976), *Troorkh* (1991), *Antikebthon* (1971) and *Tetras* (1983), among others). This disruption is usually associated with his interest in reflecting the dynamics of natural phenomena, but it can also be found in his use of technical and expressive folk musical elements, as in *Embellie* (1981).

My perspective on the problematisation of the relation between the two traditions

Notwithstanding the value of all the aforementioned explorations, by no means do they exhaust the possibilities that a problematisation of the relation between popular folk and classical traditions can open for the composer. My project is therefore an attempt to follow up and develop this creative endeavour of problematisation in relation to aspects which to my knowledge have not been exploited so far, and which are related to some very basic conditions that lie at the base of the conflictive relationship between these traditions.

As a composer, the most interesting aspects of folk and popular music to me personally are certain expressive and acoustic features derived from this social and material situation. The importance of the comical, the grotesque and the “lower passions”, the independence from the constraint of what can be written (notated) (Wishart, 1996, p. 12-43), and the spontaneity or informality of the performances, allow the intrusion of a whole range of expressive and sonic possibilities that, from a classical point of view, would be regarded as lacking technical control, concentration and care (rough attacks, impure sounds, imprecise tuning, faulty synchronization, and excessive or vulgar expressivity). Similarly, the material conditions of the performances generate acoustic phenomena of their own, such as the coexistence of the music with environmental noise or other performances, and the acoustic alterations due to the constant changes of

distance between the musical source and its receptor, either because the performers are moving, as in a parade, or because so is the listener, who is usually not restricted to the immobility of sitting in an auditorium. All these conditions generate a wide range of timbral, acoustic, rhythmic, intonational and textural phenomena that are frequently involuntary and can even pass unnoticed by performers and listeners.

Therefore, in my research *problematization* involves identifying, exploring and extensively exploiting features of folk traditions for creative purposes—and not only those that are more superficial and easier to assimilate (melodic, harmonic and rhythmic general parameters). Since these features reflect some of the most basic differences between the folk and popular traditions, on the one hand, and the Classical, on the other, the result of its creative exploitation should preserve this conflictive character and not fall back into simple assimilation.

It is important to note that my work not only draws on the work of the composers mentioned above in relation to the *problematization* approach, but also on other composers whose work exploits sonic phenomena similar to those that I identify in folk music. For this reason, the analysis of the work of certain composers can provide some of the necessary tools to take advantage of the acoustic events described above. It is very interesting and stimulating to examine the way some composers have introduced spectral music techniques to exhibit and elaborate on the hidden noise that is naturally present in harmonic sound. Such is the case of *Les Espaces Acoustiques* (1974-85), and *Vortex Temporum* (1994-96) by Gérard Grisey, *The Wheel of Emptiness* (1997) by Jonathan Harvey, *At First Light* (1985) by George Benjamin, *Winter Fragments* (2000), and *Gondwana* (1980) by Tristan Murail, among others.

The role of transcription in my compositional process

The concept of transcription as intended by Luciano Berio has been of great importance to me. It sheds light on my interest in turning to existing texts, approaching them at different levels and experimenting with the various relations one can establish with them. According to Berio, a transcription is a type of translation to other equivalences, to other

terms. In this regard, the entire development of our culture is a history of translations. Translations allow us to access other cultures and obtain knowledge and experiences from others.

All culture has to possess everything, therefore it translates everything: languages of all kinds, things, concepts, facts, emotions, money, the past and the future, and, of course, music.

(Berio, 2006, p. 31).

But it is very important to note that transcriptions can be done on different levels, depending on how active, complex or creative is our act of accessing the Text. When the transcription derives from a piece of the oral traditional repertoire it amounts to a *translation* to another language. The result is a new Text, which necessarily excludes some elements because of the approximations and generalisations to the visual-grammatical system of classical notation. This kind of transcription can give rise to a more complex one, for it is possible to greatly enrich the transcription with new musical elements and developments.

There are other indirect forms of transcription that imply more elaborated processes and have different functions. Such is the case of the transcription as a *commentary*, in which the reference to an external Text has a thematic importance and the foreign elements and experiences from the past are assimilated or antagonized. In a different manner, a transcription that enriches and transforms the original source can also be considered a form of *analysis*. In this respect, Berio says that the best possible commentary on a symphony is another symphony. He claims, for instance, that the third movement of his *Sinfonia* is the best and deepest analysis that he could have hoped to make of the Scherzo from Mahler's Second Symphony. Similarly, Alfred Schnittke allows the presence of borrowed material from varied styles in his compositions. He says that he dreams of a unified style where fragments of serious music and music for entertainment would coexist in a diverse musical reality, using individual effort to rise above materials that are taboo. This, according to Schnittke, compels a universality of culture that connects with the change in our perceptions of time and space.

By making contact with the creative work of our distant ancestors we have a different sense of time, of time as an unbroken line, almost as a "simultaneous chord."

(Schnittke, 2002, p. 46)

Additionally, a composer may transcribe his or her own work, in order to attain a better assimilation, profundity, clarity or perspective on the original text. Such is the case of Berio's *Chemins*, which are pieces with a concertante structure that are based on his *Sequenzen* for solo instruments. For Berio, the *Chemins* alternatively expand, amplify, unfold, distort, reflect, project, hide or uncover different aspects of the *Sequenzen*.

The majority of my pieces are based on a form of transcription. In some of them I have made the actual exercise of transcribing a pre-existing tune to my own terms (rhythmic approximations, dynamic interpretations, expressive indications, etc.) after different stages⁴ that allow me to understand the material for my own aesthetic needs. In other pieces the concept of transcription works indirectly, as I use pre-existing styles or dance-patterns to write my own tune and further explore it, making it alien to its original genre and closer to my own vision. Furthermore, some compositional processes consisted not only in registering ideas on paper and translating them into notation, but in looking closely at the particularities of every sonic event, with the assistance of spectrograms. I used this type of procedure in my expansions and reflections on folk material, but also to capture the peculiarities of environmental sounds and noises, from insects to trains, car horns and so on.

Ethnicity and geography of the folk and popular sources

As mentioned above, one of the most important aspects of my project is that it draws heavily on Colombian folk and popular music as a general source of musical and sonic elements, which attempts to make visible the corresponding aesthetic, sociological and cultural tensions between this tradition and the Classical. In order to understand the nature of the sources as well as their sociological context, it is important to explain Colombian ethnicity as well as its geographic distribution. These factors have shaped the Colombian folk and popular traditions as well as their socio-economic background. Understanding these underpinning factors allows us to add more layers of meaning to this music.

⁴ These different stages usually comprise, in the first place, meter, as well as pitches and rhythmic durations. Subsequently, I try to obtain a more accurate harmonic comprehension that includes microtonal intonations, in order to achieve a holistic understanding of timbral behaviour, usually with the assistance of technology or simply by imagination. Normally a following step would be to decide an instrumentation that fits with an amplification of the sound that I want to apprehend. However, in most of the cases I already have a fixed line up available to write for, so the decision I have to take regarding the instrumentation is concerned with ways of producing the sound (i. e. extended techniques).

The ethnicity of most of the Colombian population is self-defined as *Mestizo*. This term comes from the Latin *mixticius*, which means mix and its translation to English is Mestee (or Métis in the context of Eastern Canada). The *Mestizo* ethnicity corresponds to the mix between Indigenous Amerindians, Afro descendants and Spanish. In addition to the *Mestizo* population there are some groups who belong to the Indigenous and the Afro descendant communities that remained in relative isolation, unmixed, retaining most of their cultural heritage. Their isolation is partly the result of the territories they have occupied, thus a comprehension of the geographical distribution of the country becomes relevant.

Figure 1: Colombia's natural regions



Colombia has six different natural regions (Figure 1 and Appendix 1). The Andean region encompasses the three branches of the Andes mountains; as their names indicate, the Caribbean and Pacific regions cover the areas adjacent to the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean respectively; the Orinoquía region, covers part of the *Llanos* plains in the east of the country and along the border with Venezuela; the Amazon region, part of the Amazon rainforest; and the insular region, comprises islands in both the Atlantic and

Pacific oceans. In my project I will consider as geographical influences only the regions with which I have more familiarity and that have been close to my own musical and cultural background, that is, the Pacific, the Andean, and the Caribbean regions.

Figure 2: Political Map of Colombia



The Andes region is the most populous region of Colombia and contains the majority of the country's urban centres. The Andes mountains were the location of the most important pre-Columbian indigenous settlements. The Colombian Andes divide into three ranges in the south-western departments of Cauca and Nariño. These branches are the Cordillera Occidental, running adjacent to the Pacific coast and including the city of Cali (where I was born); the Cordillera Central, which runs up the centre of the country between the Cauca and Magdalena river valleys; and the Cordillera Oriental, where Bogotá, the capital city is (see Figure 2). In the sixteenth-century the Spanish started to

occupy the region, where they found the optimal climatic and best conditions for exploiting gold, as well as potential indigenous labour. The Amerindian populations diminished rapidly because of abuses, illness, expropriation, miscegenation and over-exploitation. As a consequence of this the Spanish Crown was forced to legally protect the remaining indigenous population and endowed them with the right to farming their land. After this protection and further resistance to colonisation, indigenous people ended up organized as minorities in *resguardos indígenas*, or indigenous reserves, which are usually located in geographically isolated territories of the country. 14.3% of the population of the Andean Region is indigenous. This population belongs to 13 different ethnicities (see Figure 3)⁵. It is worth noting that although there is a strong *Muisca* inheritance in the *Altiplano Cundiboyacense* (a plateau encompassing most of the Boyacá and Cundinamarca Departments, where Bogotá stands), only a few people recognize themselves as indigenous.

A number of rivers run from the Andean highlands to the sea, traversing the Caribbean region. Among these rivers is Colombia's principal river, the Magdalena, which discharges at the main port of Barranquilla. The Caribbean region is also the location of the port cities of Santa Marta and Cartagena, which were some of the first cities founded by the Spanish in the country. While generally low-lying and humid, the region also includes the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountain range and the Guajira Desert.

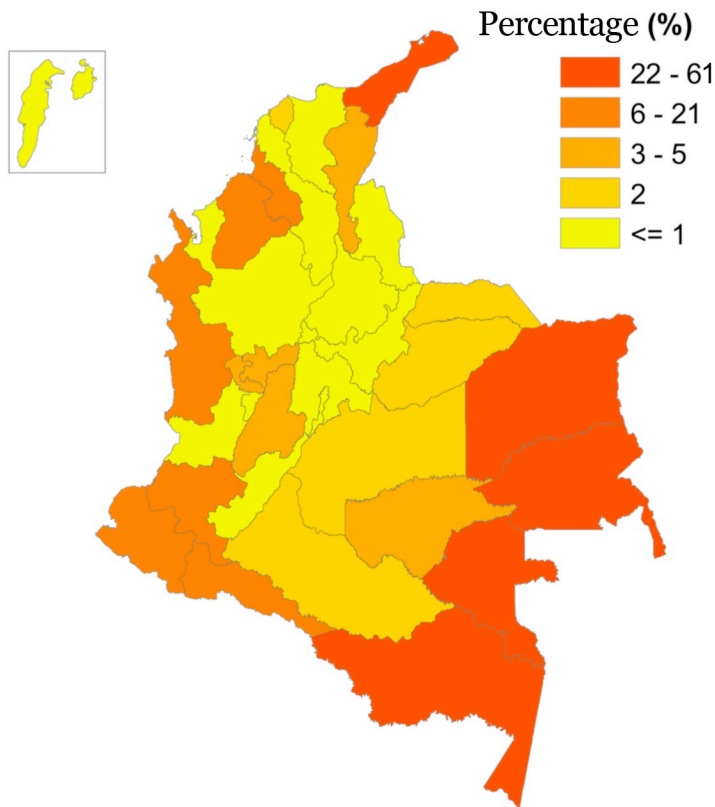
The Pacific region is highly humid; its precipitation is among the highest in the world. The majority of its population is of African descent, although it also includes several indigenous settlements. The economy is based on mining (gold and platinum), timber, cattle raising, agriculture and fishing.

Regarding the coastal population of Colombia, both Caribbean and Pacific regions are the areas of higher density of black people who were brought as slaves during the Colony Period in the sixteenth-century from Equatorial Africa to Colombia. Afro-descendant slaves were allocated in warm wild zones, in similar environments to their places of origin (the territories now belonging to Congo, Nigeria and Gabon, among

⁵ As stated by the *Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística* DANE (National Statistics Administrative Department) (2006), most of the indigenous population is concentrated in the Amazon region (53%). The Orinoquía region has 14.4% of indigenous population; the Caribbean has 11.1% and the Pacific 6.8%.

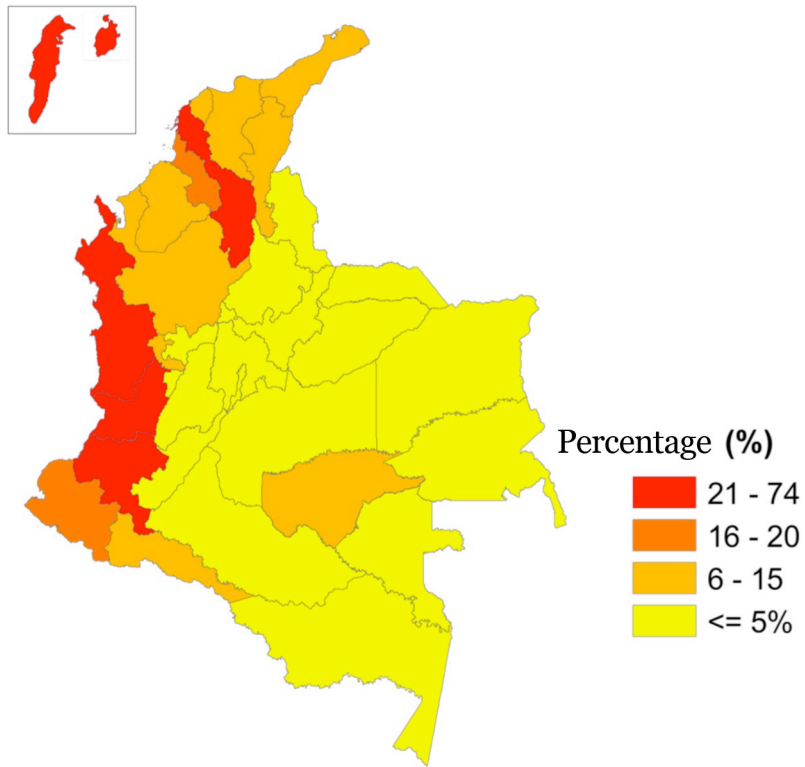
other countries). There are four different territories occupied by Afro-Colombians: The Pacific region, San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina Archipelago, The San Basilio de Palenque community in the Caribbean and some of the most productive cities of the country, as Figure 4 shows. It is worth noting that the economy in both the Pacific Region and the Palenque territories has been floundering since the importation of slavery during the Spanish Colonization.

Figure 3: Indigenous population in Colombia



The isolation of both indigenous Amerindians and Afro descendant communities together with the unfortunate economic conditions of their territories manifests itself in their musical heritage. This can be seen in the fact that neither their musical language nor their native instruments were influenced by Western traditions.

Figure 4: Afro-descendant population in Colombia



II. COMMENTARIES ON THE PIECES OF MY PORTFOLIO

Individual pieces of my portfolio

<i>Pedaços de Chonta</i> (2008) for piano quartet	2'	p. 30
<i>Elegía errante</i> (2009) for solo viola	9'	p. 44
<i>Nocturno</i> (2009) for large ensemble	5'	p. 36
<i>Chirimías metálicas</i> (2009) for solo flute	7'	p. 53
<i>Masks</i> (2009) for mezzo-soprano and Bb clarinet	5'	p. 48
<i>My Lonely Cumbia</i> (2009) for seven instruments	6'	p. 50
<i>Murmullos Atómicos</i> (2009) for large ensemble	10'	p. 39
<i>Cuarteto Palenquero</i> (2010) for string quartet	8'	p. 33
<i>Autumn Whisperings</i> (2010) for large orchestra	7'	p. 57
<i>Furias</i> (2011) for violin and piano	7'	p. 55

Total Duration: 78'

The pieces included in my portfolio can be analysed according to five different categories, as the table on the following page shows. The first exposes how the folk elements are employed; thus, if the pieces are based on transcriptions of pre-existing tunes or if their main compositional materials are original fragments composed in a specific folk or popular style, genre or dance pattern. The second shows the ethnic origins of these materials and the third their geographical location in the country. Finally, the fourth of these categories exhibits the type of environmental sounds and noises that are used in the pieces.

The order in which the pieces are analyzed obeys to the similarities in the use of materials among them, rather than the chronological order in which they were composed.

Individual Analysis of the pieces

Pedazos de Chonta (2008) for piano quartet

Pedazos de Chonta, as well as *Bordón y Requinta* (the first movement from *Cuarteto Palenquero*), are based on a detailed transcription of pre-existing material. With these pieces I intend to develop a particular approach to transcribing a *Currulao*, that is, a typical musical dance from the Afro-Colombian community living in the Colombian Pacific Coast. These transcriptions led me not only to explore and develop a wider range of compositional techniques with specific aesthetic goals but also deepened my understanding of the material itself and my relationship to it. One of my main interests was to transcribe – or translate – the timbral quality of the original source. In order to do this I had to develop different types of textural expansion that affected parameters such as rhythm, harmony, register, dynamics and density.

The rhythmic meter of the *Currulao* is 6/8 time, although sometimes it could be felt as 2/4 and is usually played by the *Conjunto de Marimba* (Marimba Ensemble). This ensemble is composed by a *Marimba de Chonta*, two *cununos*, two *bombos* and *guasás*. The *Marimba de Chonta* is a specific kind of marimba, the keys of which are cut in such a way that its timbre is rather cracked, as opposed to the more homogeneous timbre of the traditional marimba. The wood that is used to construct this instrument is called *chonta* and the dimensions of the keys as well as the way they are cut have a religious function: they are meant to give a resultant intonation that keeps ghosts or evil spirits away. The *cununos* are conical wooden drums topped with deerskin that resemble small congas, and which are plugged with wood at the bottom to give them a denser and richer sound. The *bombos* are large bass drums of different size: the smaller is called *bombo arrullador* – “singing bombo” – and the larger *bombo golpeador* – “striking bombo”. *Guasás* are bamboo tubes with tiny seeds that sound when shaken. The *Conjunto de Marimba* is characterised by the percussive quality of its sonority. Regarding the *Marimba de Chonta*, it is worth noting the imprecise tuning of the pitches it produces and the bouncing and fuzzy character of the attacks, as a result of the way it is usually played; that is, by two musicians facing each other. This contributes enormously to the polyrhythmic nature of

the texture of the *Currulao*, whose rhythm is a very fluid motor-rhythm structure that provides simplicity and clarity to the form.

All these elements create something of an integrated duality: on the one hand we have a very clear and simple melodic line and on the other a somewhat explosive sound quality, whose spectral impurities enfold the melody in a shadowy, noisy atmosphere.

From my description of the *Currulao*, I decided to maintain some elements, and to modify and transform others. I decided to keep the melody, as well as the harmonies implied by it. In any case, the main aesthetic goal of this piece is to represent the cracked sound of the *Marimba de Chonta* and the percussive character of the entire sonority of the ensemble. In general, I find this timbre is somewhat uneven and a bit noisy, features that I translated as fragmentation of the line developed by means of a pointillist and polyrhythmic counterpoint based on a microtonal structure. I created this sonority by using *hoquetus* technique, motivic fragmentations and a wide range of registers and dynamic levels. Additionally, I created a general polyrhythmic texture, using irrational units as triplets and quintuplets, as well as a great number of *acciaccaturas*. Moreover, the general percussive medium is represented by the use of different types of pizzicato on the strings (such as Bartók pizz., nail pizz., pizz. sul ponticello, pizz. behind the bridge, normal pizz., left hand pizz.) and clusters in the piano part. In addition to the timbral relationships already discussed, other elements of the *Currulao* also remain recognisable: the general rhythmic percussive pattern of the pieces (usually played by the piano on the left hand and the cello), a sense of heterophonic texture (provided by the type of relationship between the percussive pattern and the melody of the piece), the melody and its harmonic implications, although they appear slightly shadowed by seconds and microtonal intervals.

Example 1: my transcription of Gualajo's *Currulao*.



Example 1 represents the transcription of a *Currulao* that José Antonio Torres “Gualajo” usually performs with his *Marimba de Chonta*. This is a transcription of pitches and durations, adapted to the tempered system and a metric bar of 6/8 which is the one in which *Currulaos* are usually transcribed.

Example 2 illustrates the processes applied to *Pedazos de Chonta* from the transcription of the original *Currulao*.

Example 2: *Pedazos de Chonta*, bars 1-7.

The melody in *Pedazos de Chonta* is usually played by the violin, the viola and the piano right hand. The form, namely ABA, is similar but not identical to that of the typical *Currulao*. Sections A are made of the aforementioned elaborations on *Currulao*, whereas section B is constituted by a completely new material. This contrasting material is original composition – not quotation – based on the sound of a popular musical genre, *Guasca*. *Guasca* is a popular peasant genre from a different region in Colombia, the Department of Antioquia in the Andean region. Its instrumentation comprises *tiple* (small 12-stringed guitar), guitar, *maracas*, *raspa* (percussion instrument similar to the *güiro*) and voice. As the instrumentation of this genre is not mainly percussive – as *Currulao* is – I decided to use arco instead of pizzicato for its evocation. The musical construction of *Guasca* is very simple and it has a strong influence from Mexican popular music.

Some of the stylistic features of this genre that I emphasize are the frequent use of pitch bending – as a kind of ornamentation that accentuates the strong beats of the bar, as opposed to the pizzicati of the softer attacks – as well as the parallel movement in thirds and the general simplicity of the harmonic structure. This particular sonority of parallel

thirds with constant pitch bends gives this music a peculiar sonority. Some people define it as naïve and tawdry, but I find it rather genuine. The reason for interpolating this *Guasca* section is that it provides contrast while maintaining a certain coherence. On the one hand, the harmonic texture on parallel thirds gives a sense of unity between this section and the previous one. On the other, the contrast between the percussive and dry general sound attack and the mellow and bending sonority revitalizes the piece. Example 3 corresponds to the beginning of section B of *Pedazos de Chonta* (bars 25 to 32).

Example 3: *Pedazos de Chonta*, bars 25 - 32.

The image shows a musical score for Example 3, bars 25-32 of *Pedazos de Chonta*. The score is for a string quartet (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello) and Piano. The Violin I and II parts feature glissandi and dynamic markings like *mp*. The Viola part includes *arco* and *pizzicato* markings. The Violoncello part has *loco* and *p* markings. The Piano part is highly rhythmic and percussive, with dynamic markings ranging from *mf* to *ppp*. The score is written in a complex, fragmented style with many slurs and accents.

Cuarteto Palenquero (2010) for string quartet

Cuarteto Palenquero consists of three movements, ‘*Bordón y Requinta*’, ‘*Intemperies*’ and ‘*Etehvina Maldonado*’. ‘*Bordón y Requinta*’ is based on a type of transcription of a *Currulao* and uses a similar compositional methodology to that described above. The original material is a solo *marimba de chonta*. As in *Pedazos de Chonta*, one of the main compositional goals is a timbral translation of the original source, by means of exploring possibilities of textural fragmentation in relation to rhythm, harmony, register, dynamics and density. The fascinating fragmented and noisy sound of the *marimba de chonta* is also translated as a shadowed arrangement using a microtonal pointillist and polyrhythmic counterpoint, just as I did in *Pedazos de Chonta*. I further developed the use of *hoquetus* technique, motivic fragmentations and a wide range in the register and the dynamic level, using polyrhythmic texture with irrational units and *acciaccaturas*. Also, the percussive medium is represented by the use of different types of pizzicato strings – as in *Pedazos de*

Chonta – as well as bowing with the wood and even playing on the body of the instrument.

Example 4: *Cuarteto Palenquero*, ‘*Bordón y Requinta*’, bars 111 to 117.

Contemplative ♩ = 70

attacca

pp

Example 5: *Cuarteto Palenquero*, ‘*Intemperies*’, bars 3-12.

white noise on the bridge

gliss.

mp

pizz *mf*

pizz *mf*

sim.

sempre *pp*

col legno tratto

(sempre *pp*)

arco

sim.

nail pizz

col legno batt. normale

col legno batt. normale

gliss.

1/4

A

wild, unstable, aggressive behind the bridge

ff

poco a poco rit.

Sordid ♩ = 60

col legno batt. behind the bridge

gliss.

mp

p

mf

ricochet

col legno batt. *p*

pizz *pp*

col legno batt. pizz

ff

pp < mf > p < f > mp < mf > p

However, in the case of ‘*Bordón y Requinta*’ the form, as well as the general pitch-related and rhythmic material, remained identical to the source, and in this case (unlike in *Pedazos de Chonta*) I did not add original contrasting material. The reason for this

preservation is an interest in exploring the stillness and regularity of the repetitiveness of the *Currulao*, and its further possibilities of transformation, once its *bordón* (or motor-rhythm) has established its familiarity through endless repetitions. At the end of the movement, I used this placid and static quality to prepare the ground for further developments. Thus, the second movement, '*Intemperies*', consists of the addition of new material to the almost decaying *bordón*. The new material comprises fragmented, percussive and widespread gestures that create a sombre atmosphere. Its development seems to be driven by discontinuous impulses, producing a tangled texture: a sort of landscape of nettlesome insects from which the theme of the third movement will eventually emerge. Example 4 shows *moto perpetuo* of the ending of '*Bordón y Requinta*' and Example 5 shows the disintegration of this material into noisy fragments that construct a sparse texture in '*Intemperies*'. The material that connects these two ideas is in violin 2.

Etelvina Maldonado', the third movement of this string quartet, is a different type of exploration of the aforementioned transcribing procedure. Like *Nocturno* for large ensemble, the music arises from an interaction between two kinds of activity. On the one hand, a dense activity derived from the developments of the second movement, characterised by noisy timbres, greyish harmony, a polyrhythmic texture and great use of extended techniques in the instruments. On the other hand, there is a singular activity that emerges from the former mass, contouring a melody in G. The melodic material comes from a transcription of a performance of a song by *cantaora* Etelvina Maldonado, who was a folk singer from the Afro-descendant community of the Colombian Caribbean. She used to sing tangos, boleros and *bullerengues*⁶ while working in wealthy houses cleaning and ironing clothes. The transcription I made is from a bolero, *Junto al mar*, by Mexican composer Ernesto Domínguez. I paid special attention to the peculiarities of Etelvina Maldonado's performance. Consequently, although the notes of the bolero are part of the transcription, the most important part of this exercise consisted in translating the natural gestures and sonic elements of her singing into musical notation. The compositional process involved the aforementioned transcription together with other procedures of ornamentation, fragmentation and microtonal and chromatic shadowing of the melodic line, as well as amplifications of the expression

⁶ *Bullerengue* is a musical dance genre from the Colombian Caribbean, El Darién province and Panamá. It is usually performed by Afro-descendant women. The word '*bullerengue*' means womb and it celebrates woman's fertility. Its tempo is rather slow so that pregnant women are able to dance it. (Valencia Hernández, 1995).

gestures such as vibratos and glissandos. (See in Example 6). Additionally, the natural *rubato* that Etelvina makes use of in the song is precisely written out in the score, making the rhythmic flux rather fluctuating and unstable.

Example 6: *Cuarteto Palenquero*, ‘*Etelvina Maldonado*’, bars 9-12.

The image shows a musical score for four instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The score is divided into four measures. Above the first measure, there is a box labeled 'B'. The score includes various performance instructions such as 'flautando', 'Natural harmonics sul E', 'sul ponticello', 'arco flautando', 'nail pizz.', 'col leg hab', 'ricochet', 'sul pont.', 'gliss.', 'noisy', 'senza sord.', and 'Molto vibr.'. Dynamics markings include *mp*, *p*, *f*, *pp*, *mf*, and *pochiss.*. The score also features slurs, accents, and other musical notations.

Nocturno (2009) for large ensemble

Nocturno comprises an interaction between two kinds of activity. On the one hand, a mass-like activity characterised by noisy timbres, piercing textures, sombre harmony, a development driven by discontinuous impulses, and the absence of easily discernible individual patterns. On the other hand, there is a singular activity that emerges from the former mass, contouring a melody in Eb minor (Ex.7).

Example 7: *Nocturno*'s melodic material.

Tempo rubato, passionato but tender ♩ = [60-84]

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is in Eb minor and features a melodic line with various rhythmic values and slurs. The bottom staff is also in Eb minor and features a similar melodic line. The tempo is marked as 'Tempo rubato, passionato but tender' with a quarter note equal to 60-84 beats per minute.

Example 7 shows the simplest possible transcription of the Eb minor melody; it has no expression indications but the mere structural notes of the line.

It is important to outline the programmatic idea behind the piece. I imagine a lonely little girl trying to sleep during a scary night in a humid tropical region full of disturbing insect sounds. She wishes a motherly woman be there, singing a lullaby that would help her sleep and feel safe. The child is in a predicament: if the light is turned off the insects will come to her and she will feel the unpleasant and disturbing texture of the insects on her skin. But if the light is turned on, the bugs will feel attracted by the light, fly around it and as a consequence of the optical effect, the room will be inundated by their immense scary shadows. Fortunately, there is a particular insect, a butterfly perhaps, that calls the child's attention with a soothing effect, and somehow takes the place of the longed-for female chant. The Eb minor melody represents the chant of the absent woman, which is sometimes confounded with the flight of the butterfly. The sprightly activity, for its part, resembles to a certain extent the kind of background environmental noise of the landscape where this scene is supposed to take place, and which consists, in part, of insect sounds.

The reference to the female voice is important in the conception of this piece because an important goal of *Nocturno* is to capture a number of peculiarities of the voice of a folk singer. I took as a particular reference the voice of *cantaoras* (female singers) from the Colombian Pacific coast region, a humid tropical area. In this regard, some of the elements that interested me were the persistent vibratos, the thick colour of the low voice, the constant glissandos to reach the structural notes of the songs, the flexibility of the tempo, the involuntary microtonal intonations, among others.

This Eb minor melody is the main structural device that gives this piece formal unity. It provides a horizontal coherence and induces different levels of tension and expression. These different intensities not only originate all the vertical expansion through orchestrational procedures but also, in some cases, an elongation of the phrasing, acting as an emotional dilation or proliferation of rhythmically contrapuntal elements.

However, as mentioned, the melody also symbolises an insect that is continuously moving. This introduces an interest in replicating the sense of movement and the variable distance between the melody and its listener. In this regard, I conceive the melody as a physical object that can be placed in different positions and at different distances. For example, if I represent the melody as standing at a minimal distance from

the listener, as if he or she were able to touch it, only a part of the melody would be audible – even only a single sound – but its timbral texture will be very rich. If I represent the melody as being very far away, the whole melody is presented but in a blurred and confusing way.

In a similar fashion, as the butterfly symbolized by the melody is moving all around (sometimes flying, sometimes standing, sometimes only perceptible as a shadow or a reflection on a window or a sewer) its characteristic volatility is represented by the way the melody travels through the ensemble all the time. This is reminiscent of the Schoenbergian *Klangfarbenmelodie* but with identifiable and referential dramatic purposes.

Example 8: *Nocturno*, bars 19-22.

Example 8 illustrates this idea. The melody that I “disseminate” in this fragment corresponds to bars 2–8 of Ex. 7. The main apparition of the melody (*Hauptstimme*) starts in the oboe and the clarinet, followed by the viola, the horn and the clarinet in bar 20. Then it travels to the flute, the cello, the oboe and the viola at the end of bar 21.

Finally, in bar 22 it is taken up by violin 2 a semitone higher (E min. instead of Eb min.) and presented as a secondary voice (*Nebenstimme*) that basically takes the form of an echo, due to the fact that it is played in artificial harmonics, *ppp*, *col legno tratto*, with no doublings, in a very high register and articulated in a less clear and faster rhythmic figure than usual (septuplet).

The differences between Examples 7 and 8 illustrate other ways in which *Nocturno* incorporates characteristic features of the Colombian folk tradition. From the rhythmic point of view, it is noticeable how in Example 8 the notation specifies what in Example 7 was simply indicated as *rubato*. The goal is to recreate the type of “irregularity” and “imprecision” characteristic of *cantaoras*’ singing. The rhythmic figures have become elastic and the rhythmic phrasing is longer and more fluid. Similarly, from the point of view of the intonation, a general instability of pitch is achieved by the constant glissandi on the main voice and the presence of ‘echoes’ in different tonalities. This sense of instability is also reached by the constant timbral transformations. The use of different tonal layers also generates a sense of discontinuity as well as different levels of definition of the melodic line, especially when combined with timbral modifications and density variations, as a consequence of doublings.

***Murmillos atómicos* (2009) for large ensemble**

This piece is an attempt to establish a resemblance between two types of sound that have always fascinated me: the first one could be labelled as ‘equivocal mass texture - sonority’. I used it in a piece for brass quintet and percussion, called *atómik*, a piece I wrote in 2002 and that I directly quote in *Murmillos atómicos*. It is highly influenced by Iannis Xenakis’ texts, music, and György Ligeti’s music, some of Samuel Beckett’s characters, and the imagery used by filmmaker David Cronenberg.

The second sonority can be found in the wind bands from San Pelayo, a town in the Colombian Atlantic Coast that hosts a Festival during the last week of June. In this Festival musicians from the state of Córdoba gather to perform different traditional dances and rhythms. The most important of these is *porro*, which together with other rhythms from the region, was originally an amalgamation of African drums and

indigenous woodwind instruments (usually *gaitas* that are like ‘pipes’, and *flautas de millo*, a sort of rough flute).

According to Amparo Lotero (1989), the 19th-century *porros* used to be performed by native Indians and African slaves in their breaks from the long journeys and in holiday festivities. In contrast, the members of the upper class, Spanish and Spanish descendants, used to have private parties, usually when they were celebrating the bullfights. In these parties they used to have wind band ensembles performing European mazurkas and polkas. Throughout the nineteenth century, as slavery started to disappear, both types of celebrations started to conflate. Peasants started to get involved in the bullfights and also to learn how to play the European brass instruments and clarinets. The musicians that used to play in the upper-class parties started to learn how to play the *porro* repertoire. Given the volume they were able to reach, the European instruments were more suitable for outdoors performance than the indigenous. These changes have determined the modern *porro*. The indigenous wind instruments were replaced by clarinets, trumpets, euphoniums, tubas and trombones. The instrumentation also includes snare drum, *bombo golpeador* (an indigenous tenor drum) and a pair of cymbals.

The economy of the region has had a paradoxical impact on the music. San Pelayo is not a very affluent region, so there has not been much money to invest in music. At the beginning of the twentieth century second-hand instruments were imported and the first band, created in 1902 by Alejandro Ramírez, was called ‘*pior es nada*’, which means something like ‘better than nothing’ or ‘could be worse’ (Lotero, 1989). According to a number of reports, all the instruments had patches and repairs. In present times there are luthiers in the village but lots of people still can only afford second-hand instruments that often are not in a very good condition. This fact, in my opinion, contributes to the characteristic sound of the genre. These are the features I find particularly attractive in Pelayera music:

- The way the brass section and clarinets attack the notes is somewhat careless. This produces two effects: an abrupt and flat sound, and minor alterations in the tuning.
- The expression is very straightforward, one-dimensional and imposing, rather than ambiguous, subtle or layered. In some examples this can be seen in the

sharp, bright and homogeneous vivacity of the solo trumpets, and the absence of lyricism in dull, flat and rather clumsy euphonium solos.

- The roll of the percussion has a very intense, loud, and constant presence that adds a sense of precipitation and euphoria to the whole piece as well as a somewhat noisy atmosphere.
- The tempo varies slightly but frequently, in an apparently involuntary way, making it flexible or rather elastic. The effect is usually one of pulling back.

Some of these features are the result of the level of the performers, for some of them are amateurs. The quality of the sound is also affected by the fact that the musicians are always walking and sometimes dancing. Besides, since this music is played outdoors, while people are dancing, singing, shouting, talking, laughing, or even while the members of other bands are playing nearby or warming up, the musicians have to play very loud and their capacity to hear themselves and one another, and thereby of controlling their sound, is reduced. It is also important to conceive all these “accidental” environmental sounds an integral part of the musical experience, since they constitute its natural context—as opposed to the concert hall, for instance. In this sense, the memory I have of this music is always delightfully blurred and confusing, and this is an aspect I want to draw into my work.

I believe this particular sonority exhibits not only a very apparent sense of vitality but also, and perhaps paradoxically, of fragility and deterioration. The fragility is related to the lack of definition of the sound and my blurred memory of it. The corruption relates precisely to how this fragility gives the idea that the music is close to collapsing, and to the way the sounds are constantly altered without clear control.

These characteristics are also related to the other sonority I am interested in, the dense and grotesque ‘mass-like’ sonority. This sonority is not only drawn from musical sources, but also inspired partly by some Beckettian characters with physical limitations and eccentric behaviours, and by the grotesque imagery of David Cronenberg’s films. Some of these elements evoke in me an idea of fragility, finitude, the organic corruption and the grotesque. In order to impart the sense of fragility and corruption that I seek, I intend to convey an idea of confusion and ambiguity to the delivery of the sound and the lines. To do so, I employ the following procedures:

- I “bend” or transform quickly the sound, regarding different parameters: pitch, dynamic and timbre (In this last case, for instance, by gradually muting or adding air to the sound in order to transform it into a breathy noise).
- I constantly add rests to the line, in order to evoke a sense of interruption; of incapacity to carry on.
- I focus on dissonance.
- I tend to privilege the mass texture, in terms of density and rhythmic complexity, over clear or very defined single lines. Furthermore, I limit the pitch range to an interval of major third cluster.
- In more specific cases I fragment and mix the lines, redistributing them as in a *hoquetus*, and I superpose unrelated lines with very different levels of activity to inject the mass with random level of density.

It is important to note that among the very obvious differences between the two sound worlds that I have been discussing, the most noticeable is that whereas the mass texture sound does not have distinguishable lines or melodies but lots of unclear lines that together create a crowd of strange and disturbing elements, the folk sound is a regular dance, with typical roles such as a recognisable pattern both in the bass line and the percussion, with a melody, a tonal harmony with very clear dominant and tonic functions, and subordinated melodies or counterpoints. Although all these elements are delivered in a chaotic and confusing environment, we are still able to recognise them as such.

Example 9: *Murmillos Atómicos*, bars 32-33.

The musical score for Example 9, *Murmillos Atómicos*, bars 32-33, is presented for five instruments: T. Sx., Hn., B. Tpt. 1, Tbn. 2, and B. Tbn. The score is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings. The Hn. staff includes markings for *gliss.*, *pp*, *f*, *pp*, *mp*, *p*, *f*, *pp*, *mp*, *mf*, *mf*, *pp*, *ppp*, *f*, and *fp*. The B. Tpt. 1 staff includes *gliss.*, *mf*, *mp*, *pp*, *f*, *p*, *mf*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *mf*, *p*, and *mp*. The Tbn. 2 staff includes *mp*, *gliss.*, *p*, *pp*, *mf*, *mp*, *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *mp*, *p*, *pp*, *mp*, *p*, and *pp*. The B. Tbn. staff includes *mp*, *gliss.*, *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *p*, *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *mf*, *mp*, and *pp*. The T. Sx. staff includes *fp*. The score also features various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*, and *fp*, as well as *gliss.* markings. Red circles highlight specific notes in the Hn., Tbn. 2, and B. Tbn. staves.

Example 9 and 10 illustrate some of these procedures. The lines connecting across the instruments in the first of the two bars of the example are exhibiting the cluster harmony being used.

Example 10: *Murmulllos Atómicos*, bars 38-40.

I draw on both the similarities and differences between these two sound worlds in *Murmulllos atómicos*. In the first section I create a progressive accumulation of grotesque, equivocal clumsy lines, and I multiply and superpose them until they reach a dense mass texture. The second section has two quotations from *El Pilón*, a traditional anonymous *Porro*. The first one appears as a blurred memory. I combine breathy fluttertongue in pedal notes of the trombone, with the use of the weak register in the piccolo and breathy sounds on saxophones, as Example 11 shows. The second quotation appears in the middle of a multiphonic sound on the baritone saxophone, orchestrated with the whole ensemble, as if emerging from a disturbing, dark but vibrant landscape. In order to recall

the festive atmosphere of San Pelayo, this section has noisy juxtapositions (like very long notes from the first section of the piece in the trombones) and more rhythmic activity (the piano is prepared with foil paper to simulate a snare-drum playing the line of the original *Porro*). The third section starts right after a truck horn-like sound in the trombones part, and consists of a mixture of the two types of sound I have mentioned.

Example 11: *Murmullos Atómicos*, bars 43-49.

The musical score for Example 11, *Murmullos Atómicos*, bars 43-49, is presented in a standard orchestral format. It includes parts for Piccolo, Saxophones (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Baritone), Horns, Trumpets (1, 2, 3), Trombones (1, 2, Bass), and Piano. The score is in 3/4 time and features various dynamics and articulations such as *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *mf*, and *mp*. It includes performance instructions like "breathy sound", "flz. air sound", "flz. breathy sound (pedal note)", "gliss.", "sim.", "Harmon mute stem out", and "8va".

Elegía errante (2009) for solo viola

Elegía errante is based on a meditation on Mexican Mariachi and Argentinian *Zamba*. The reason I devoted special attention to these two foreign types of popular music is the enormous influence Mexican and Argentinian cultures have had on Colombian popular

culture. As it was mentioned before, *Guasca* is an example of the Mexican influence, of which *Elegía* also appropriates some elements that can be better explained by reference to the foreign sources.

One of the most important characteristics of Mexican Mariachi is the conceited, almost boastful and self-indulgent expressivity. It can actually be regarded as vulgar or ‘cheesy’ in some circles but I believe that this generous release of affection opens up an incredibly interesting and strange new world of acoustic phenomena. The features that represent this musical behaviour the most are, in my view, the *Canto Huapango* style and the parallel harmonic movement in thirds. I took those musical elements from the Mexican sources and the general rhythmic pattern and phrasing from the Argentinian *Zamba*, which I also used for my piece *Masks*.

Canto Huapango is most commonly known in Mariachi music, although it is also related to *Son Huasteco* and *Conjunto Norteño* music. One of its distinctive characteristics is the use of a very wide and magnified falsetto in the singer, which I further amplified in *Elegía errante* (bars 19-20, 37-43 and 45-51). A general instrumental and vocal feature is the excessive and melodramatic vibrato. Both characteristics are used in my piece in the section corresponding to bars 87-118.

In addition to providing the rhythmic pattern of *Elegía*, Argentinian *Zamba* contributes to the evolution of the general mood of the piece. Although the main theme is mainly based on the dramatic expression of Mexican Mariachi, most of the developments and contrasting sections of *Elegía errante* tend to decay in sorrowful, frightful and almost nauseous dissonances and distortions. This process is a pronounced overstatement of the melancholic atmosphere of the *Zamba*, and stands in contrast to the brave proclamation of the musical discourse characteristic of Mariachi. This is particularly noticeable in bars 56-80, 119-148 and 149-190. The first and the last sections clearly express a mournful character, whereas the second progressively disintegrates.

Elegía errante has an arch form, ABCB'A'. Section A covers bars 1-55, B bars 56-86, C bars 87-148, B' 149-190 and A' 191-209. Sections A and A' present the main theme, whose general harmonic texture is a parallel movement usually on thirds. Properly, the development of the whole piece takes place from bar 1 to bar 148 (A-C), the remaining

B' and A' sections working as codas. A not only expounds the totality of the theme (unlike A' in which only the two last phrases appear) but also unfolds and expands on expressive points of the melody, similar to the compositional process of *Nocturno*. In *Elegía*, however, unlike *Nocturno*, I do not use irrational units to express the *rubato* but resort to tempo indications such as *ritardando*, *morendo*, *ritenuto* and *accelerando* among others. This is an effective way of achieving the intended result given that coordination with other performers is not a concern.

Example 12: fragment of *Elegía's* melodic material.



Elegía is built upon the theme presented in Example 12. This theme never appears in its most basic form in the piece; it is always subjected to modifications and amplifications. Example 13 shows the theme in one of its amplified forms.

Example 13: *Elegía errante*, bars 36-51.

Tranquil and not too sad (♩. = 63)
 ♩ = ♩, *sempre*

Musical notation for Example 13, showing a melodic fragment. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. This is followed by a series of chords and a melodic line with various dynamics: *mf*, *f*, *sf*, *mf*, *ff*, *p*, and *mf*. The tempo is marked *Tranquil and not too sad* (♩. = 63) and *sempre*. The notation includes a *gliss.* marking and a *scratch: overpressured sound* marking. The tempo changes to *Con moto* and then *a tempo*. The notation includes a *sul ponticello* marking and a *gliss.* marking. The dynamics are *pp*, *f*, *p*, and *pp*. The notation includes a *gliss.* marking and a *gliss.* marking. The dynamics are *mf*, *f*, *p*, *mf*, *ff*, and *fff*. The notation includes a *gliss.* marking and a *gliss.* marking. The dynamics are *mf*, *f*, *p*, *mf*, *ff*, and *fff*.

B stands in strong contrast to A. There is no parallel motion in thirds and instead of the passionate expressive and piercing character of the latter, it has to be played as expressing resigned grief and with the wood of the bow, which gives it an opaque sound. The development of B leads to a numb repetitive passage (bars 67-86) that is suddenly interrupted by section C, which gives the most furious and vigorous delivery of the musical material of the piece. This section is similar to the previous one in the reiterative melodic gesture, but different in character and tempo. It is fast, virtuosic and gallant. However, this enthusiasm will conduct the piece to its exhaustion in bar 118, followed by a sordid section in which all the elements of the piece appear in a disarticulated manner and with a blurred intonation (bars 119-148). Example 14 shows the distorted version of Example 15.

Example 14: *Elegía errante*, bars 128-130.

Example 15: *Elegía errante*, bars 101-105.

Subsequently, section B' provides a contrast to this type of emotion by presenting a *dolce* and tender melody, which even though not as gloomy as B, is still sad and fragile. Section A' revitalises the piece once more by emphasising the characteristic poignant and intense temperament of the main theme.

Masks (2009) for mezzo-soprano and Bb clarinet

Masks is based on a poem, 'Masks', by Oz Hardwick. Oz and I worked together in a project to write a lied. The point of departure of our collaboration was our common interests in the subject of carnival. Accordingly the subject of Oz's poem is one of the characteristic elements of carnivals, namely, the masks. This is the poem:

i

Night slips on its mask of morning, painted
pale in ashes. Late winter snow
crisps glittered streets, still untainted,
before the first tentative footstep. Slow:

Behind our masks, all are equal,
we carry nothing but paint and bones,
our worldly will, our dark desire.

Dance your costumed circles of forgetfulness:
you will know neither toil nor pain,
for at day's end you dance with Death.

ii

Who dreams this earthly immortality,
who today is king? Come, rich ladies
ruled by folly: follow me.

iii

Transient royalty who walk in pomp,
who feel neither care nor remorse, gather
your goods and garlands: all things fly.

night falls on silence
forgotten snow lies melted
eyes blink, hatched from mask

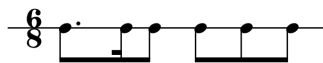
Masks for mezzosoprano and Bb clarinet has three parts. They are mostly based on the structure of the poem. The first part (bars 1-33) covers an instrumental introduction, the first stanza of the poem, and the first group of verses of the second stanza. The musical material is a dance-like pattern in 6/8 (sometimes alternating with 12/8), based on the rhythmic frame of the Argentinean *Zamba*⁷ represented by metric and agogic accents, sometimes livened up with edgy syncopations (Ex. 16). *Zamba* is a slow dance played primarily on guitar and *bombo legüero*.⁸ The dance steps consist of a walking step, an

⁷According to a theory proposed by Osvaldo Nemirovski and Marta de Brasi, the dance originated in Peru in the Creole genre known as the *zamacueca* of Peru in 1824. It came to Argentina through "Alto Peru," a region that is modern day Bolivia and through Chile between 1825 and 1830.

⁸ *Bombo legüero* is an Argentine drum traditionally made of a hollowed tree trunk and covered with cured skins of animals such as goats, cows or sheep. It derives from the old European military drums, and uses a similar arrangement of hoops and leather thongs and loops to tighten the drumheads, which are usually double. The body is made of a hollow log, with the inside scraped and chiselled. Because the fur is left on the hide, the bombo's sound is deep and dark. The bombo is played while hanging to the side of the drummer, who drapes one arm over the drum, to play it from above, while also striking it from the front.

alternate step (two steps at one time), and a tiptoe alternate step or *sobrepaso punteado* (three steps at one time). The name *zambo* is a colonial term used to refer to individuals who are of mixed Amerindian and African ancestry. Apparently, the dance was named this way because its lyrical content was aimed at seducing the female *zambas*. (Pérez Bugallo, 1995)

Example 16: main rhythmic material of *Masks*' first sections.



The pitch material in this first section consists of one single pitch (D4) with microtonal oscillations. The stillness of the harmonic and melodic material is a direct representation of the meaning of the poem – a cold, shadowy, lonely and quiet opening. The elaboration of this minimal material consists in detailed timbral and dynamic variations in a rather Scelsian style.⁹ Subsequently, as the text comes in at bar 13, the music turns into a delicate rhythmic counterpoint. After the subtle and peaceful opening section, there is a transition in which the dance-like rhythmic material transforms itself into a whispery atmosphere from which the first note of a solo clarinet emerges, introducing the upcoming section of the piece.

The second part of *Masks* (bars 34-58) starts after the text invites the listener to join the carnivalesque parade (“follow me” in bar 32). This part opens with a solo clarinet, evocative of a *Cumbia*, a Colombian indigenous dance from the Atlantic Coast region.¹⁰ The folk line of the clarinet gradually reaches a euphoric moment (bar 39) at which point the singer begins to declaim the rest of the second stanza of the poem in a dramatic and perturbing way. The recitation continues as the clarinet line develops motivically, recalling some timbral effects of the opening section, such as the multiphonic sonorities. From bar 53 onwards the piece starts settling down until the end of the section (bar 56)

The player’s hands hold a soft-headed mallet and a stick, which strike drumhead and wooden rim in alternation. The bombo serves as a combination of bass and percussion, not just maintaining the metre, but evoking an elemental, visceral response. (Pérez Bugallo, 1980)

⁹ This type of textural development is further developed in my pieces *Giros y Rostrós*, in a more complex and sophisticated manner, and *Lullabitos* in which some of the most important goals are the economy of material and its integration to a tune.

¹⁰ I will explain the basic characteristics of *Cumbia* in detail in the analysis of *My Lonely Cumbia*.

where the clarinet evokes the opening solo of the section. However, whereas the initial gesture of the opening solo used a perfect fourth interval (bar 34), now the interval is an augmented fourth. Subsequently, the level of activity of the clarinet line starts to diminish until it reaches a single sound, and the still material with which the piece opens is presented again one tone lower.

The last section (59-67) is a disturbed and dark re-exposition of the sonic material of the beginning of the piece. The text corresponds to the third stanza of the poem. The contrapuntal relation between the voice and the clarinet loses activity in relation to the start of the piece: the line of the clarinet becomes a sort of a drone, with some interruptions revealing fatigue and disappointment after the preceding anger and drama. For its part, the harmonic relation between voice and clarinet becomes more complex: instead of a parallel unison, they stand in a minor second interval. However, the level of timbral and dynamic ornamentation is reduced, so the general texture of this section is duller and flatter than the opening of the piece. The last phrase of *Masks* enters an even darker atmosphere: the interval relation between voice and clarinet becomes smaller, their intonation is unstable due to the microtonal relation with the previous pitches, and the very last sound of the piece vanishes into an bleak airy sound.

***My Lonely Cumbia* (2009) for seven instruments**

This piece develops some of the material and compositional concerns of *Masks* and *Nocturno*. It alters the former's main melodic material and expands on the environmental sound explored in the latter. Additionally, the main material of the second section of the piece consists of the rhythmic pattern of *Cumbia*,¹¹ the aforementioned Colombian indigenous dance from the Atlantic Coast region that is evoked in *Masks*.

¹¹ *Cumbia* began as a courtship dance practised among the African slave population. Later, it was influenced by European music and some European instruments were added to its instrumentation. It is often asserted that *Cumbia* is a variant of Guinean *cumbé* music. However, it should be noted that the rhythm of *Cumbia* can be found in *Yoruba* music (more specifically, the rhythm is associated with the god *Obatalá*), and in other musical traditions across West Africa. *Cumbia* started in the northern coast of South America, what is now Colombia and Panama, mainly in or around Cartagena during the period of Spanish colonisation. Spain used Colombian ports to import African slaves, who tried to preserve their musical traditions and also turned the drumming and dances into a courtship ritual. *Cumbia* was mainly performed with just drums and claves.

The first of the three sections of *My Lonely Cumbia* is evenly subdivided in three subsections. The first one (rehearsal letters A and B) opens with the noisy insect gestures previously developed in *Nocturno*, and is followed by a breathy atmosphere (rehearsal letter C) in which an E4 in the clarinet progressively takes the form of the first melodic impulse, a quotation from *Masks* (see Example 17). The presence of insects features in this piece with quite a different meaning than it did in *Nocturno*. Here, the insect sounds allude to an abandoned, arid and morbid landscape that, to my mind, represents the decay of a great number of Colombian territories, especially those that are not part of the Andean region.

Example 17: *My Lonely Cumbia*, bars 22-28.

Once the theme has been developed through timbral ornamentations and interpolations, and microtonal expansions of the structural notes of the melody, a transition to the *Cumbia* tempo takes place at rehearsal letters F to G. The melodic material of the second section of the piece, the *Cumbia* (rehearsal letter H to K), is based on a transcription of a solo by Colombian clarinetist José “Cheo” Guerra. The remaining elements of the texture of this section derive from the lines of the percussion instruments of traditional *Cumbia*, that is, maracas and three different kind of drums: *alegre*, *llamador* and *tambora*. The role of these instruments is assigned to the piano, the flute, the string instruments and the two percussion players. Thus, at rehearsal letter I, the cello plays what

The slaves were later influenced by the sounds of the new world instruments from the *Kogui* and *Kuna* tribes, who lived between the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and the Montes de María in Colombia and *Kuna Yala* in Panama. *Millo* flutes, *Gaita* flutes, and *güiros* were instruments borrowed from the indigenous tribes. The interaction between Africans and natives under the Spanish caste system created a mixture from which the *gaitero* (*Cumbia* interpreter) appeared, with a defined identity by the 1800s. (Vitale, 2006)

corresponds to the line of the *tambora* in the *Cumbia* genre. Similarly, the bongos (percussion 1) play the *alegre* drum material, the piano plays the *llamador* drum part, and the violin and maraca (percussion 2) play the line corresponding to the maraca part in the traditional *Cumbia* (Example 18). In this section the clarinet plays the main melodic material while the flute has a contrapuntal role, sometimes responding to the clarinet line and sometimes shadowing its line with chromatic ornamentations and contrapuntal displacements, as shown in Example 19. During the entire duration of the second section of the piece all the different roles above are continually reallocated among the instruments (H-K), except for the clarinet, which always has the melodic function. Towards the end of this part, the textural and rhythmic density diminishes and the tempo slows down, preparing for the final section of the piece. After a transitional section at rehearsal letter N, the final part of the piece briefly and subtly recalls some elements from the beginning in an ethereal and scintillating atmosphere.

Example 18: *My Lonely Cumbia*, bars 55-61.

Example 19: *My Lonely Cumbia*, bars 67-74.

Chirimías metálicas (2009) for solo flute

Written for American flutist Shanna Gutiérrez, *Chirimías metálicas* is my reaction to the ensemble *chirimía* from the Cauca department of Colombia. The Spanish word *chirimía* was originally used to denominate what are known as the instruments of the oboe family. Nowadays the word designates two types of musical ensemble, one in the Chocó Department, part of the Afro-Colombian community tradition, and the other in the Cauca Department, part of the indigenous tradition. *Chirimías metálicas* is based on this second ensemble. The instrumentation of the traditional *chirimía caucana* consists of a large number of cane flutes and a percussion set formed from wood drums with sheep and cow skins, a snare drum, and *mates* (maraca-like instruments made of a dried pumpkin without the filling). This ensemble used to play in community dances as well as military marches during combats, led by the *puil* (conductor), to encourage the warriors during the battles (Benavides 1987). One of the most appealing characteristics of this music is the sound quality of the ensemble. It is very heterogeneous, which is probably the consequence of a number of factors, such as the rough quality of the instruments and the differences between each instrument regarding both materials and construction. Additionally, the musicians usually play while walking and also their performance level is not standardised. Therefore it is very common to find amateurs, children or performers out of practice playing along with instrumentalists on top form.

Chirimías metálicas mainly consists in the development and transformation of my transcription of a march from the *chirimía*'s repertoire. The piece is composed using theme and variations development technique and it has five sections that shape the following form ABCDA'. A corresponds to bars 1-24, B to bars 25-48, C to bars 49-105, D to bars 106-154, and A' to bars 155-192. The march is highly repetitive and accentuated, and these two features are preserved in the transcription I made. In A the theme of the march is expounded. It involves two kinds of materials, *x* (bars 1-6) and *y* (bars 7-24). Material *x* consists of melodic arpeggios in C# minor followed by chords played as multiphonic sounds. The decision to use multiphonics is based on the heterogeneous, plural and complex sound quality of the aforementioned *chirimía caucana*. Material *y*, on the other hand, consists of a melodic development on the arpeggio of material *x*, and the resultant scale resembles a Dorian mode on C#. The accents of the

original version of the tune, usually more obvious in the percussion instruments, have been replaced by percussive effects on the flute, such as lip or tongue pizzicatos, tongue rams or key click sounds.

B develops these materials. The first transformation occurs in bars 27 and 28 in the form of a variation on intonation, rhythm, dynamic and articulation, of bars 3 and 4. Bars 29-32 consist of fragmentations of the previous material. Similar alterations occur in the following bars (from 34 to 37) and bar 38 is a synthesis of the multiphonic sonority with the melodic material, as it is played while singing. This introduces a timbral element in material *y*, which is further developed in bars 40 to 43 with the microtonal oscillation and the fluttertongue. Bars 44 to 48 consist of the same type of transformation presented in bars 27 and 28.

The following C section starts with an almost literal re-exposition of material *y* but after 16 bars the tune seems to mutate into a timbral, breathy transformation on the 7th grade of the scale (the dominant of the major relative scale, E) which lasts for eleven bars, in which the harmonic quality of the sound is introduced in the piece. Thus, the next phrase (bars 77 to 87) is a presentation of the harmonics of material *y*. From bar 88 to 93 a fragment from material *y* is obsessively repeated, while the pitch is gradually lowered until it reaches a transposition of a $\frac{3}{4}$ tone lower. From bar 94 to 103 most of the aforementioned procedures are combined: fragmentation, pitch and timbral alteration. At this point of the piece the development has suffered the most significant changes and as a sudden contrast to this climactic situation, D starts with the quotation of one of the most popular tunes of the *chirimía* repertoire, *La Guaneña*.¹²

After this quotation, which has the structural function of a re-transition, the theme is finally re-expounded.

¹² This tune is often performed in the *Carnaval de blancos y negros* (Carnival of Blacks and Whites) in Pasto (Nariño Department).

***Furias* (2011), for violin and piano**

Furias is composed on the rhythmic framework of a *Pasillo*. *Pasillo* is a South American genre of music extremely popular in the territories that belonged to Gran Colombia in the nineteenth century: Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela and Panamá. The term '*Pasillo*' means short step. The dance is in 3/4 time and is meant to be danced fast with paces from 25 to 35 centimetres long. There are two types of *Pasillos*, vocal and instrumental. The first one is usually performed *a cappella* and the second is played with piano in salons, or guitars and percussion in more popular environments. (Abadía Morales, 1973) Based on the way this music is performed both by musicians and dancers, *Furias* exaggerates the impetuous and vigorous character of the instrumental genre, attaining a rather violent and mechanical expression, accentuated by rhythmic ornamentations of irrational units (see Example 20). This particular mood is also conveyed by the use of percussive sonorities on the violin. Furthermore, the general sound quality of *Furias* is dry, rhythmic and percussive, with an opaque harmonic display as a result of the predominance of the low register. Accentuations and articulations play a dominant role in defining both the expression and the shape of the rhythmic pattern of the main sections of the piece, as example 20 shows.

Furias can be divided in three general sections. The first one (bars 1-134) presents the energetic material mentioned above, with a melodic interpolation (bars 24-57) in which a particular *Pasillo*, *Los Filipichines* by Ema Perea de la Cruz (see Example 21), is vaguely quoted (see example 22). This section also contains an ethereal interlude based on the development of the quotation (bars 58-84) that also re-expounds the percussive material of the piece in the higher register of both instruments. At the end of this part the elements of the beginning resume with the addition of a closure motif in bar 126, based on the typical phrase endings of *Pasillos*. However, instead of providing a closure, this motif opens up a new idea: a robotic expression that intends to recall a damaged machine by spread gestures in the piano part, out of which a new lyrical and linear event in the violin emerges (bar 135).

Example 20: *Furias*, bars 2-4.

Violino

Piano

staccato

jeté

staccato

staccato

staccato

f *p* *mf* *f* *p* *f* *p* *mf* *mp*

3

3

5

loco

loco

8^{va}

8^{va}

8^{va}

Example 21: My transcription of Ema Perea de la Cruz's *Los Filipichines*

Example 22: *Furias*, bars 51-65 in violin part.

51

5

mp *ff*

Slow ♩ = 50

58

6

6

8^{va}

5

6

6

6

6

ppp *ppp* *mp* *p*

sul pont.

col legno tratto

arco ord.

molto sul pont.

sul pont. molto legato

norm. molto vibr.

Accordingly, the second section of *Furias*, ‘tranquil’, is characterized by the superimposition of an emotional expression to the orbit of the defective mechanism. The melodic line here is slow, gentle and fragile, continually “reflected” by harmonic *flautando* sounds, which gives it a translucent effect emphasized by the resonance of the piano (see Example 23).

Example 23: *Furias*, bars 141-145.

The tranquillity of this section is suddenly interrupted towards the end by reminiscences of the material of the first section of the piece. Here, the diaphanous reverberations become a single quasi-permanent drone, sometimes in the piano part and sometimes in the violin. In spite of the interruptions incrementing in size and frequency, the ethereal drone continues nearly until the end (bar 216), generating a sense of uncertainty and inconclusiveness.

Autumn Whisperings (2010) for large orchestra

This piece constitutes a reflection on a phenomenon that I find both disturbing and fascinating at the same time. This is the image and the meaning of the railway, which I only had the chance to experience when I came to Britain to do the PhD, three years ago. Although this means of transport is quite common in Europe, in countries such as Colombia it is known only to the older generations. *Ferrocarriles Nacionales de Colombia* (Colombian National Railways) lasted from 1954 to 1991 but it was never prosperous. A company that reached more success was *El Ferrocarril de Antioquia* (Antioquian Railways) in the Department of Antioquia (see Figure 2), an area which obtained substantial wealth from this enterprise between 1874 and 1929. The failure of *El Ferrocarril de Antioquia* had an enormous impact not only in the economy of the country but also on the culture of Antioquia. An actual musical genre emerged out of it, called *Música de Carrilera* (Railway Music), to which *Guasca* belongs. A Colombian newspaper (*El Despertador*) once defined

Musica de Carrilera as "shifting like the coffee from *Antioquia* to *Caldas*, a body of cheap rhythmic songs that left us with expressions of sorrow and melancholy for lost oedipal and brothel worlds which pace the marketplace with its drunkenness and sleepy horses among immense trucks and a ruined rail system." This whole image and the general decay associated with both the music and the failure of the railway and the economy is the poetic starting point for *Autumn Whisperings*.

The piece uses as primary material the sound of a cargo train suddenly braking, which I recorded together with some other samples in Birmingham and Coventry. Although the piece is based on a reflection on the phenomenon of the rail in Colombia, the idea of an abandoned train making a sound as if still working proved inspiring. The sound of the train separated by interludes or transitions articulates the formal structure of *Autumn Whisperings*. There are three appearances of the train and four interludes in the piece.

The first of these 'train expositions' appears at rehearsal letter C and it is intended to represent merely the smoke of the train, in a percussive and ghostly sonority, rather like the atmosphere evoked by the following picture (Figure 6).

The second 'train exposition' appears at rehearsal letter E and is associated in my mind with the rusty colours of an abandoned train. (See Figure 7 and 8).

Figure 6: *Ferrocarriles Nacionales de Colombia* (Colombian National Railways). La Cumbre (Valle del Cauca).



Figure 7: *Ferrocarriles Nacionales de Colombia* (Colombian National Railways). Cali, Valle del Cauca.



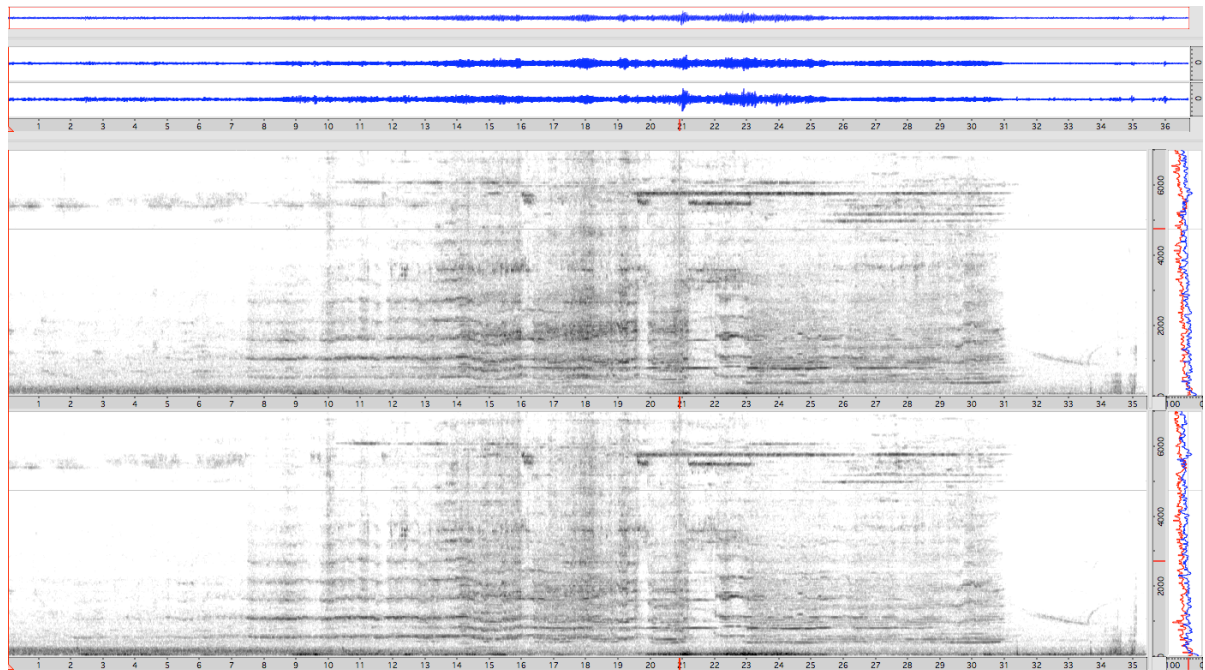
Figure 8: *Ferrocarriles Nacionales de Colombia* (Colombian National Railways). Cali, Valle del Cauca.



The third and last appearance of the train material occurs in bars 75-83, although the most important element of this exposition is the rhythmic material at rehearsal letter I, which correlates with a recorded sample of the train in movement, just after it has stopped but while it is still influenced by its inertia. The immediately preceding bars to I (from letter H) are an anticipation of this sonic event. This anticipation constitutes a complete sonic journey in itself: firstly, the sound of leaves on the line excited by the onrush of wind and the strong vibrations of an approaching train; secondly, the train starting to brake; and finally the actual sound of the machine coming to a halt. I

meticulously transcribed the sonic events corresponding with the music at rehearsal letter H from the sonogram of the actual sample using IRCAM's Audiosculpt software (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Sonogram of selected sample of the train braking.



The sound produced by the leaves dancing with the wind corresponds to the fragment from 0'' to 7.5''. The sound produced by the train braking corresponds to the segment from 7.5'' to 20'' and the actual sound of the braking process relates to the fragment from 20'' to 31''. From 31'' to the end of the sample the sound is similar to the first segment, although with greater prominence of low frequencies. This sample and its corresponding sonogram was the source material not only of the music at rehearsal letter H but also of that at rehearsal letter E, although here only the third segment is used. At letter H I intended to recreate the darkness and brutality I perceived in the sample, by using a generally loud dynamic level, as well as multiphonics in the clarinet parts, trills and flutter tonguing in the high register of the oboes and flutes and other extended techniques in the strings, such as scratch tones. By contrast, the representation I created in the train appearance has a more harmonic approach. Even though I am still using

multiphonics (this time in the bassoon part), that is the only extended technique I use for this fragment and it is a harmonic starting point out of which a chord will be orchestrated in the brass section, oboes, clarinets and strings. As this fragment is based on a rusty feature (as Figure 7 and 8 show) the degradation of the colour is represented by continuous pitch bending and very wide vibratos and oscillations in the strings and the brass section.

The interludes, in another way, are transformations and further developments of the material corresponding to segment 0" to 7½" in the sonogram. The first one, for instance, is represented by the use of breathy sounds in the wind section and white noise effects on the strings, with very subtle anticipations of the melodic material of the third interlude in the solo violin parts (bars 8-10). Similarly, the third interlude (rehearsal letter F) exposes the aforementioned melodic material with juxtapositions of the breathy effects of the first interlude. Moreover, the fourth interlude recalls the airy atmosphere of the first one, but in addition to the evocation of the vibration of the railway leaves, a few pieces of rubbish (like cans, cigarettes, empty packs, leaflets or even newspapers) will be incorporated to the intended symbolization, substituted by whispers of the musicians from the orchestra reading from newspapers they have in their individual parts.

By contrast, the second interlude emerges from the last sound of the first train presentation, a tam-tam sound whose resonance is orchestrated by a chord that introduces the current section. After the stillness of this chord is established, a pale but delicate fragment of a tune in *Pasillo* rhythm makes a ghostly appearance in the second flute. Then, after a few seconds in bar 40 other fragments of different *Pasillos* superpose and multiply themselves gradually. Subsequently, after reaching a dense mass texture in a continuous increment of the tension, this section will give rise to the second exposition of the train. This interlude, like the first one, has bits of the melodic material of the third interlude in the piano part and some of the grey gestures of the beginning of the piece. This interlude has in common with the second one the density of the counterpoint, although in this case the material of the contrapuntal lines is melodic and derives from a quotation, and the contrapuntal lines of the last interlude derives from the text that the musicians are reading. The speed of the delivery of these lines in both interludes, together with their dynamic level and the number of layers in which these materials are multiplied, make their perception unrecognizable and only part of a global effect.

CONCLUSIONS

The two key concepts of my research in composition are the notions of problematisation and carnival. Within my research framework these notions have been understood and applied in the following manner: problematisation arises from the attempt to incorporate and explore some of the conflicting aspects of the relationship between Colombian folk and popular musical expressions and Western classical musical tradition; and the carnivalesque refers to any use of musical expression that involves a resistance to, or subversion of, dominant classical discourses. In this sense, the carnivalesque aspect of folk and popular manifestations generates tensions with the classical tradition. My compositional work aims to reveal these tensions and to develop them as a source of musical material.

The process of problematisation has been embodied in different ways in the pieces comprising my portfolio. Some of them constitute a reflection on the coexistence of music with environmental noise, including buzzing of insects, as well as truck horns and train braking sounds. Others explore pitch transformations, sometimes using gradual transpositions, such as the fall in pitch perceived when a vehicle passes by at great speed. In relation to distance, the notion of looking at material through a magnifying glass has been taken as a departure point for musical explorations regarding timbral and textural developments. Some pieces also retain and emphasise the rhythmic, intonation and timbral elements characteristic of the typical expressivity of folk performers belonging to a specific tradition (e. g. *cantaoras*). In other cases, my main interest has been to translate and expand the timbral nature of the original instrumental sources as well as to transcribe idiosyncratic melodic and rhythmic gestures of particular folk performances. Moreover, forms of expressivity that could be regarded as excessive or vulgar from a classical point of view are examined and expanded in some of the pieces of this work.

Overall, this compositional approach makes tangible the kinds of gestures that can be taken as involuntary but, as I mentioned before, involve fundamental aspects of sound experience. As a result of having considered the tensions from these two different traditions in this particular way, I believe I have achieved a more complete comprehension of sound as the basic raw material of musical composition, above and beyond moral and

cultural preconceptions. Furthermore, the resulting music of this set of works reflects a considerable level of consistency in a vivid expression capable of transmitting strong feelings of fragility, nostalgia, violence, tenderness or sorrow.

Considering the use of transcription in my work and Berio's reflections on its historical role and its different possible levels, I have reached the conclusion that after having carried out this research, I have attained a more profound assimilation, clarity and perspective on the original sources, whether they are environmental noises, Colombian or Latin American folk performances, Western avant-garde music or even my own previous pieces. It has been of great importance to me to be able to analyse all these different repertoires, enriching and transforming my perceptions of them to a certain extent, and also assimilating and sometimes challenging the way I have experienced them in the past.

Also, during these three years I developed more control over the use of the aforementioned elements, which allowed me to make a freer use of them in my compositions and to include and elaborate on isolated and unrelated materials. This made the poetics of the pieces stronger and the narrative more flexible and fluid.

Nevertheless, according to the different levels of how active, complex or creative a transcription can be, and how abstract, representational, faithful or conceptual the outcome may be, I believe after having discovered this way of approaching sonic materials (personal memories, cultural influences and others' wisdom and learning) that there is a complete journey ahead, with plenty of open possibilities. Going back to my thoughts on possible levels of distance between musical source materials and my own works, I believe I can still achieve an even greater degree of transformation, assimilation and reinvention for my future projects.

In addition, having considered sounds beyond the Western tradition as worthy of musical learning has had a great significance in the evolution of the construction of my identity. The reason for this last point is that my exploration of the folk tradition has been a way of continuing the task of understanding, recognizing and assimilating the different ethnic, cultural, historical and material components of the Colombian and Latin American heritage and condition. I believe that this is an important task, especially in the context of a society

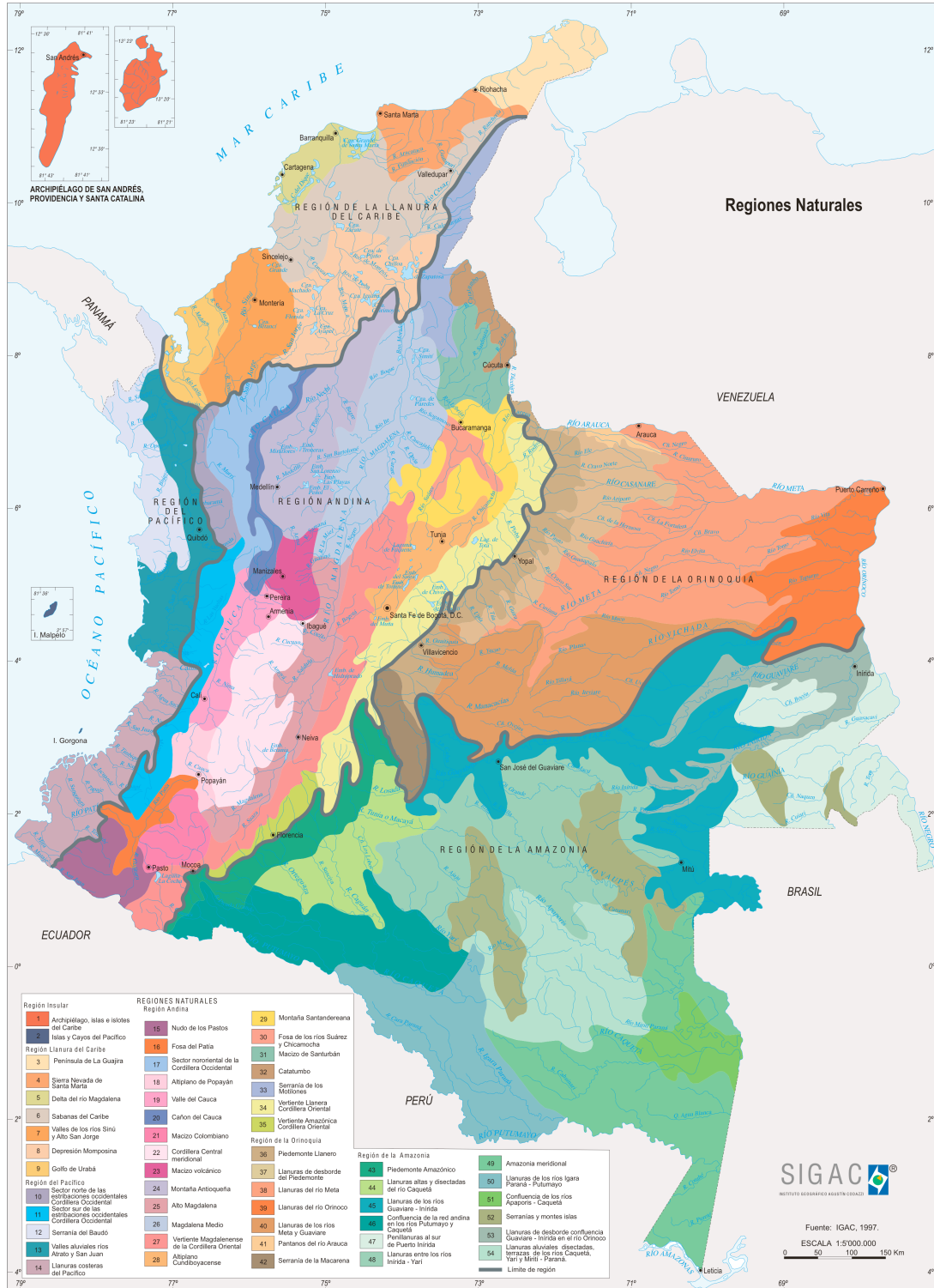
such as the Latin American, with its dismissive attitude towards the indigenous and African components of its own *mestizo* race.

As essential as the considerations above have been for my research, it is important to add that my work can also be seen simply as a poetic celebration of the creative and subversive spirit of the carnivalesque.

Appendix 1

Geographical and Political

Map of Colombia



From Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi. Available at <http://mapascolombia.igac.gov.co/wps/portal/mapasdecolumbia/>
 Last accessed: 08/06/2011

A p p e n d i x 2

C O U R S E S A N D R E S I D E N C I E S

- 2010 Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival
Public Master class with Rebecca Saunders (Selected by competition
from doctoral student applications.
Huddersfield University, November 19th, 2010
- Dartington Summer School Festival (Bursary)
Course: “Old bottles, new wine”, with John Woolrich
July 17th-31st, 2010.
- “Getting it right? Performance practice in contemporary music
conference”
With Julian Anderson, Diego Masson, Helmut Lachenmann,
Michael Finnissy, among others.
Guildhall School of Music & Drama
LSO St Luke's, April 27th, 2010.

T E A C H I N G E X P E R I E N C E

- 2008-2011 Visiting Lecturer
Composition and Research Departments
Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham City University,
Birmingham UK
- 2004-2006,
2007-2008 Visiting Lecturer
Composition Department, Faculty of Arts
Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá - Colombia
- 2003-2005 Full Time Lecturer
Music Department, Humanities Faculty
Universidad de Cundinamarca, Zipaquirá - Colombia
- 1999-2003 Visiting Lecturer
Junior School, Faculty of Arts
Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá - Colombia

A p p e n d i x 3

P R I Z E S A N D G R A N T S

- 2011 Honorable Mention, IAWM Search for New Music 2011 Competition
Awarded work: *Nocturno*, for large ensemble
- 2008-2011 ORSAS (Overseas Research Student Award Scheme) sponsorship
- 2008-2011 Birmingham Conservatoire scholarship
- 2010 First Prize, Boult String Quartet Prize,
Awarded work: *Cuarteto Palenquero*, for string quartet
Birmingham Conservatoire.
- 2010 Finalist, Composition Competition, Città di Udine 2010
Awarded work: *Cuarteto Palenquero*, for string quartet
- 2008-2010 Colfuturo Beca-Crédito
- 2007 MMus Course Prize 06/07
Birmingham Conservatoire - BCU, October 2007.
- 2006-2007 Young Talents Grant, Central Bank of Colombia
- 2006 First Prize, X National Composition Competition
IDCT Bogotá, October 2006
Awarded work: *En luz y sombra: Disertaciones para tuba y ensamble*
- 2005 Creation Grant
Colombian Ministry of Culture, July 2005
Outcome: *Three Suites*, for Band
Supervisor: Juan Antonio Cuéllar
- 2003 Finalist, VII National Composition Competition
IDCT Bogotá, October 2003
Awarded work: *Mecanismos*, for cello and piano

A p p e n d i x 4

P U B L I C A T I O N S

- 2011 *'Nocturno' for large ensemble: An Orchestration of Distance*
In CeReNeM Journal, University of Huddersfield
Academic article, available at:
<http://www2.hud.ac.uk/mhm/mmt/research/cerenem-journal/mhm-cerenem-journal-issue2/Noguera.pdf>
- 2009 *La música tradicional como fuente de expansión acústica en las "Folk Songs" de Luciano Berio*
In 'Sonograma', November 2009
Academic Article, available at:
www.sonograma.org/num_06/Folk-Song-de-Luciano-Berio.html
- 2008 *Kottos de Iannis Xenakis, Música para un gigante*
In 'Cuadernos de música, danza y artes visuales', pp. 27-45.
Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá-Colombia, April 2008
Academic article

R E C O R D I N G S

- 2010 *Masks*, for mezzo-soprano and clarinet.
Based on a poem by Oz Hardwick.
Leeds+Lieder Festival, 2009 Composers + Poets Forum
Leeds College of Music
Recorded in Leeds on the 3rd of October 2009, in The Venue at Leeds College of Music.
- 2009 *Quattor verba*, para cuarteto de cuerdas
"Compositores Javerianos IV" level, Cuarteto Manolov
Pontificia Universidad Javeriana
Recorded on the 22nd of April 2008, in the Concert Hall at the Luis Angel Arango Library, Banco de la República (Bogotá, Colombia).
- 2007 *En luz y sombra: disertaciones para tuba y ensamble*
National Composition Competition "Ciudad de Bogotá"
Academic Music – Chamber Music, Awarded works 2003 – 2006
Secretaria de Cultura, Recreación y Deporte, Bogotá-Colombia
Recorded on the 22nd of February 2008, in the León the Greiff Hall at the Colombian National University in Bogotá.
- 2001 *Mioclonía*, for solo piano
"Por Colombia" level, Martha Rodríguez (piano)
Pontificia Universidad Javeriana
Recorded on the 10th of March 2001 in the Pablo VI 101 Hall at the Faculty of Arts, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (Bogotá, Colombia).

A p p e n d i x 5

P A R T I C I P A T I O N I N C O N F E R E N C E S

2010 *'Nocturno' for large ensemble: An Orchestration of Distance*
Academic paper
In 'Research Study Day'
BCU Birmingham Conservatoire, December 11th, 2010

Murmullos Atómicos: An attempt to merge references to folk music and the organic world
Academic paper
In 'Research Study Day',
BCU Birmingham Conservatoire, May 29th, 2010

2009 *Masks*, for mezzo-soprano and Bb clarinet
Based on a poem by Oz Hardwick
Performance and presentation
Helena Raeburn (mezzo-soprano), Benjamin Graves (clarinet)
PLG Composition Symposium
Royal Festival Hall, South Bank, London, November 22nd, 2009

2009 *Pedazos de Chonta: A comment on a 'Currulao'*
Academic paper
In 'Research Study Day'
BCU Birmingham Conservatoire, May 30th, 2009

A p p e n d i x 6

R E C E N T P E R F O R M A N C E S (2 0 0 7 - 2 0 1 1)

- 27.06.2011 *Lullabitos*, for piano quintet
Schubert Ensemble
Adrian Boult Hall,
Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham (UK)
- 31.05.2011 *Elegía errante*, for solo viola
Alliz Nicholas, viola
Final Recital, Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester (UK)
- 16.05.2011 *Furias*, for violin and piano
Mary Dullea (pf.) and Darragh Morgan (vl.)
Frontiers Series, Recital Hall
BCU Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham (UK)
- 14.05.2011 *Hipotenusa*, for string trio
Hebrides Ensemble
York New Music Spring Festival, Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, York
(UK)
- 18.03.2011 *Autumn Whisperings*, for large orchestra
Birmingham Conservatoire Symphony Orchestra,
Edwin Roxburgh (cond.)
Frontiers Series, Recital Hall
BCU Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham (UK)
- 11.03.2011 *Porro Azul*, for wind orchestra
Birmingham Conservatoire Wind Orchestra,
David Purser (cond.)
Frontiers Series, Recital Hall
BCU Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham (UK)
- 02.02.2011 *Giros y Rostros*, for four instruments
Jack McNeil (b. cl.), Sebastiano Dessanay (db.), Sofia Lundström
(vla.) and Daniel Tengberg (vc.), Joe Cutler (cond.)
Royal College of Music of Stockholm (Suecia)
- 31.01.2011 *Giros y Rostros*, for four instruments
Jack McNeil (b. cl.), Sebastiano Dessanay (db.), Sofia Lundström
(vla.) and Daniel Tengberg (vc.), Joe Cutler (cond.)
Frontiers Series, Recital Hall
BCU Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham (UK)
- 14.06.2010 *My Lonely Cumbia*, for small ensemble
Interrobang Ensemble, Simon Cummings (cond.)
Frontiers Series, Recital Hall
BCU Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham (UK)

- 16.03.2010 *Murmullos Atómicos*, for large ensemble
Thallein Ensemble, Chi-Hoe Mak (cond.)
Louis Andriessen Residence Workshop, Frontiers Series
ABH Hall, Birmingham (UK)
- 08.02.2010 *Elegía errante*, for solo viola
Garth Knox, viola
Frontiers Series, Recital Hall
BCU Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham (UK)
- 15.12.2009 *Elegía errante*, for solo viola
Rose Redgrave, viola
“Night of the Unexpected”, Old Joint Theater, Birmingham (UK)
- 30.11.2009 *My Lonely Cumbia*, for small ensemble
Curious Chamber Players, Rei Munakata (cond.)
Frontiers Series, Recital Hall
BCU Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham (UK)
- 28.11.2009 *Masks*, for mezzo-soprano and Bb clarinet
Based on a poem by Oz Hardwick
Helena Raeburn (mezzo-soprano), Benjamin Graves (clarinet)
Composers Platform, Recital Hall
Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham (UK)
- 08.11.2009 *Chirimías Metálicas*, for solo flute
Shanna Gutiérrez, flute
Chicago Flute Club, Flute festival 2009, Member Showcase Recital
Hotel Orrington, Evanston, Illinois (EE UU)
- 03.10.2009 *Masks*, for mezzo-soprano and Bb clarinet
Based on a poem by Oz Hardwick
Helena Raeburn (mezzo-soprano), Benjamin Graves (clarinet)
Leeds + Lieder, The Venue, Leeds School of Music, Leeds (UK)
- 15.09.2009 *Quattor Verba*, for string quartet
Cuarteto Manolov
CD Release
Label “Compositores Javerianos”.
Luis Angel Arango Hall, Bogotá (Colombia).
- 04.08.2009 *Chirimías Metálicas*, for solo flute
Shanna Gutiérrez, flute
Musique Fatale series
Pablo VI Auditorium, Bogotá (Colombia)
- 13.08.2009 *Chirimías Metálicas*, for solo flute
Shanna Gutiérrez, flute
Musique Fatale series
Centro Colombo Americano, Bogotá (Colombia)

- 05.08.2009 *Chirimías Metálicas*, for solo flute
Shanna Gutiérrez, flute
Musique Fatale series
Centro Colombo Americano, Bucaramanga (Colombia)
- 18.06.2009 *Nocturno*, for large ensemble
Orchestra of the Swan, David Curtis (cond.)
Recital Hall, BCU Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham (UK)
- 18.02.2009 *Pedazos de Chonta*, para cuarteto con piano
Schubert Ensemble
Workshop, BCU Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham (UK)
- 11.04.2008 *Alborada*, for ensemble
Ensamble deciBelio, Patricia Vanegas (cond.)
Pablo VI Auditorium, Javeriana University, Bogotá (Colombia)
- 11.12. 2007 *En luz y sombra: disertaciones para tuba y ensamble*
Jorge Quinteros (tba), Angela Contreras (db), Miller Yate (b. cl.),
Rafael Ochoa (perc.) and Rafael Zambrano (cond.).
UniAndinos Auditorium, Bogotá (Colombia)
- 22.10.2007 *En luz y sombra: disertaciones para tuba y ensamble*
Jorge Quinteros (tba), Angela Contreras (db.), Miller Yate (b. cl.),
Rafael Ochoa (perc.) and Rafael Zambrano (cond.).
Bogotá Contemporary Music festival
León de Greiff Auditorium, Bogotá (Colombia)
- 30.11.2007 *Alborada*, for ensemble
Thallein Ensemble, Lionel Friend (cond.)
Frontiers Series, Recital Hall
BCU Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham (UK)
- 22/05.06.2007 *Missa*, for baritone, percussion and electronics
Chi-Hoe Mak (bar), Wei-Hsin Cheng (perc.), Carolina Noguera and
Lamberto Caccioli (elec.)
Frontiers Series, Recital Hall
Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham (UK)
- 26.03.2007 *Alborada*, for ensemble
BCMG Birmingham Contemporary Music Group
Edwin Roxburgh (cond.)
Workshop BCU Birmingham Conservatoire, cbso, Birmingham
(UK)
- 15.03.2007 *Mecanismos*, for cello and piano
Huw Watkins (pf.), Robin Michael (vc.)
Frontiers Series Plus, Recital Hall
Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham (UK)

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