

## The Learned Style in Argentine Music: Topic Simultaneity and Rhetorics of Identity in the Work of Carlos Guastavino

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### Resumo

Este artigo analisa a interacção entre tópicos europeus e argentinos vernáculos em duas obras de Carlos Guastavino: ‘Un domingo de mañana’ (Um domingo de manhã), fuga a três vozes que integra os *Diez preludios* para piano (1952) e combina o estilo erudito com o tópico da canção infantil; e o quarto andamento – ‘Fuga y final’ – da *Sonata para piano em dó sustenido menor* (1946), cujo tema do sujeito utiliza o tópico da canção e dança popular da América do Sul denominada *cueca*. O estilo erudito não está presente apenas através do processo de composição da fuga, mas também pelo uso de um subtópico específico, sucintamente abordado neste texto, que estabelece a ligação entre estas obras e a tradição organística barroca e respectiva recepção na música para piano do século XIX.

Em oposição à perspectiva essencialista que tem privilegiado a identificação dos designados “idiomas folclóricos” nos estudos da arte musical latino-americana, este artigo pretende realçar o facto de os tópicos europeus serem tão importantes como os tópicos vernáculos na construção da retórica musical da identidade argentina.

### Palavras-chave

Estilo erudito; Guastavino; Teoria dos tópicos; Tropicificação; Alegoria da escuta.

### Abstract

This article examines the interplay of European and Argentine vernacular topics in two works by Carlos Guastavino: ‘Un domingo de mañana’ (A Sunday Morning), a three-part fugue from his *Diez preludios* for piano (1952) that combines the learned style with the topic of the children’s song, and the fourth movement—‘Fuga y final’—of his *Sonata for piano in C sharp minor* (1946), whose subject uses the topic of a South American folk dance and song called *cueca*. The learned style is not only present through the fugal procedure, but also by the use of a specific subtopic, briefly presented here, that connects these works to the Baroque organ tradition and its nineteenth-century reception in piano music. Against the essentialist view that privileges the identification of the so-called “folk idioms” in the study of Latin American art music, the article aims to emphasise the fact that European topics are as important as vernacular ones in the construction of the musical rhetoric of Argentine identity.

## Keywords

Learned style; Guastavino; Topic theory; Troping; Allegory of listening.

I believe our tradition to be the entire Western culture, and I also believe that we are entitled to that tradition, even more than the peoples from one Western nation or another.<sup>1</sup>

**W**HAT MEANINGS ARE CREATED WHEN EUROPEAN and Latin American topics are combined? In this article,<sup>2</sup> I examine the interplay of European and Argentine vernacular topics in two works by Carlos Guastavino: ‘Un domingo de mañana’ (A Sunday Morning), a three-part fugue from his *Diez preludios* for piano (1952) that combines the learned style with the topic of the children’s song, and the fourth movement—‘Fuga y final’—of his *Sonata for piano in C sharp minor* (1946), whose subject uses the topic of a South American folk dance and song called *cueca*. The learned style is not only present through the fugal procedure, but—as we shall see—also by the use of a specific subtopic, briefly presented here, that connects these works to the Baroque organ tradition and its nineteenth-century reception in piano music.

Against the essentialist view that privileges the identification of the so-called ‘folk idioms’, I aim to highlight the fact that European topics are as important as vernacular ones in the construction of the musical rhetoric of Argentine identity.

The semantic effect of topic simultaneity is possibly one of the most intriguing and yet fascinating insights afforded by a topical approach to musical analysis. Robert Hatten, Kofi Agawu, Melanie Lowe, and Raymond Monelle, among others, have noted in their analyses the effect of the concurrent use of topics of either similar or contradictory expressive connotations.

Agawu addresses the issue of ‘simultaneous topical unfolding’ in *Playing with Signs*, and suggests inherent hierarchies in the ‘topical interplay’.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, he admits that there is no

<sup>1</sup> Jorge Luis BORGES, «El escritor argentino y la tradición», in *Discusión, Obras completas* (Buenos Aires, Emecé, 1957), p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> This article started its life as a paper presented at the *2nd Conference of the International Musicological Society’s Regional Association for Latin America and the Caribbean*, (ARLAC-IMS), Santiago de Chile, January 2016. I am indebted to Silvina Mansilla, Eduardo Blumberg, Antonio Formaro and Erin Helyard for sharing their research and ideas with me, and to Hernán D. Ramallo for his careful typesetting of the musical examples. I want to thank David Agg for reading and commenting on the final version of this article and, especially, for his memorable rendition of *Un domingo de mañana* on the organ, which was my starting point.

<sup>3</sup> See Kofi AGAWU, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton - N.J., Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 36-7.

objective protocol for determining topical dominance and that, faced with a ‘complex of topics’, the listener—or the analyst—will decide which one to prioritise depending on their agenda.<sup>4</sup>

Hatten, possibly the author who has theorised the most about the issue of topic interaction, has coined the terms ‘trope’ and ‘troping’ to conceptualise this phenomenon.<sup>5</sup> He defines trope as ‘the bringing together of two otherwise incompatible style types in a single location to produce a unique expressive meaning from their collision or fusion’.<sup>6</sup> In other words, the combination—whether simultaneous or contiguous—of two topics with different semantic associations results in a third sense that is more than the sum of its parts. He calls this result the ‘emergent meaning’.<sup>7</sup> Hatten distinguishes different types of tropes, including metaphors, synecdoche, and irony. In the most recent formulation of his model, the importation of a topic into a new stylistic context also produces troping. When the interaction produces a ‘merger’, the trope is akin to metaphor, whereas when the merge is avoided and the topics remain in contradiction, we are in the presence of irony.<sup>8</sup>

Lowe, in her study of Haydn’s minuets, uses the concepts of topical consonance, topical enrichment and topical dissonance to describe different degrees in which a minuet movement can challenge listeners’ expectations. Topical consonance refers to an unproblematic relationship between the movement’s title and its content, and does not involve any topical ‘interplay’. Topical enrichment occurs when the topic is complemented or questioned by ‘additional expressive elements’ that supplement it without overpowering it, whereas topical dissonance appears when the expressive content of a movement ‘does not [...] concur with its title’.<sup>9</sup> She cites as an example the interplay between the learned style (in the form of canons) and the minuet in Haydn’s *Symphony no. 23*.<sup>10</sup>

Monelle deals with the tension generated by the juxtaposition of two opposing topics most extensively in his analysis of the *Fugue in A flat major* BWV 886 (WTC II, 17)—which combines a trio sonata subject over a *passus duriusculus* countersubject. He proposes this as a clear example of the ultimate deconstructive tendency of music, which he names, following Paul de Man, ‘allegory

<sup>4</sup> AGAWU, *Playing with Signs* (see note 3), p. 114.

<sup>5</sup> Hatten’s views on this issue have evolved over the years. See for example: Robert HATTEN, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation*, *Advances in Semiotics* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 295, 170 ff.; and also, Robert HATTEN, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2004), p. 68.

<sup>6</sup> HATTEN, *Interpreting Musical Gestures* (see note 5), p. 68.

<sup>7</sup> HATTEN, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven* (see note 5), p. 165.

<sup>8</sup> Robert HATTEN, ‘The Troping of Topics in Mozart’s Instrumental Works’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, edited by Danuta Mirka (New York, Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 515.

<sup>9</sup> Melanie LOWE, ‘Falling from Grace: Irony and Expressive Enrichment in Haydn’s Symphonic Minuets’, *The Journal of Musicology*, 19/1 (Winter 2002), p. 178.

<sup>10</sup> LOWE, ‘Falling from Grace’ (see note 9), p. 179.

of listening'.<sup>11</sup> This concept, like its cognate in literary theory, points to the inherent instability of all texts and the precariousness of interpretations, not only of signs and symbols but of tropological devices as well.<sup>12</sup> He reminds us that '[e]ven symbolic signification in music is open, polyvalent, bountiful, and indexical meaning is always present'.<sup>13</sup>

These studies provide a solid framework to conceptualise and understand topic simultaneity. Their focus is, of course, the mainstream Western repertoire and deals only with European topics interacting with other European topics. Latin American art music, on the other hand, presents a very specific type of topic simultaneity: the concurrent use of vernacular (folk, indigenous or urban popular) and European topics. This phenomenon, as we shall see, offers an additional perspective on the nature of the 'emergent meaning'.

When the expressive content of both topics is congruent, the overall meaning is reinforced. The interplay of the pastoral and the *triste / estilo* and *milonga* topics in Carlos López Buchardo's *Campera* (1919) is a clear example of this form of topical enrichment.<sup>14</sup> The title sets the scene in the countryside, which is clearly represented by the oboe and the compound metre; however, the subtle hint of the *milonga* rhythm in the accompaniment and the *triste / estilo* cadence at the end of the main theme tell us that this is no generic rural landscape but the Argentine Pampas.<sup>15</sup>

A much more complex situation appears when the expressive content of the European and local topics at play is incongruent. One such case is the 'troping' of the venerable learned style with vernacular topics, a combination that can often be found in the work of Argentine composers. Alberto Ginastera, for instance, combines the learned style with the pentatonic topic in the fifth of his *Doce preludios americanos* and, with the topic of the children's song, in his *Toccata, villancico y fuga* for organ; Luis Gianneo employs it in his piano series *Música para niños* no. 2, 'Fuga' and also in no. 8, 'Pericón', which presents points of imitation combined with the topic of this Pampean dance; Astor Piazzolla combines it with tango in his celebrated 'Fuga y misterio', from the opera *María de Buenos Aires*. This topic combination re-enacts, with a Latin American accent, the old

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<sup>11</sup> Raymond MONELLE, *The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays* (Princeton - N.J, Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 205.

<sup>12</sup> Lindsay WATERS and Wlad GODZICH, *Reading De Man Reading*, Theory and History of Literature (Minneapolis - MN, University of Minnesota Press, 1989), vol. 59, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Raymond MONELLE, 'BWV 886 as Allegory of Listening', *Contemporary Music Review*, 16/4 (January 1997), p. 79.

<sup>14</sup> The title can be loosely translated as 'From the countryside'.

<sup>15</sup> I have mentioned other facets of this piece in previous articles, including Melanie PLESCH, 'Demonizing and Redeeming the Gaucho: Social Conflict, Xenophobia and the Invention of Argentine National Music', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 47/4-5 (September 2013), pp. 337-58, and in 'Topic Theory and the Rhetorical Efficacy of Musical Nationalisms: The Argentine Case', in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Music Semiotics in Memory of Raymond Monelle*, edited by Nearchos Panos (Edinburgh, The University of Edinburgh, 2013), pp. 328-37, available at <<http://sites.ace.ed.ac.uk/edmusemiotics/proceedings/>>.

rhetorical dichotomy of high and low: European and local, city and countryside, Self and Other,<sup>16</sup> and affords an insight on the complex issue of art music and identity construction in the so-called peripheries.

### The many faces of the learned style

It is useful, at this point, to consider the topic of the learned style in some detail. This complex ‘style’ is in fact a constellation of topics, or what Hatten calls a topical field.<sup>17</sup> We know that the label is a modern concept, applied retrospectively to different aspects of ‘learned’ compositional practices variously described in the sources as ecclesiastic, *a capella*, *antico*, grave, and fugato, among others. Keith Chapin, in what is the most extensive survey of the topic to date, concludes that it comprises several ‘styles’.<sup>18</sup> In her posthumous book, Wye Allanbrook lists a number of styles that could potentially belong to this family: canon, chant, church style (ecclesiastical), fugato, high style, learned style, species counterpoint, *stile antico* and strict style.<sup>19</sup>

Two elements seem useful to differentiate these rather dissimilar streams: the type of procedure employed and the source and character of the subject material. Ratner, for instance, detected in the music of the nineteenth century—and Beethoven’s in particular—the presence of at least three procedures: canon, fugato and fugue. He further distinguished within the learned style the subtypes of *ricercar* (*alla breve*, *stile legato*) and *canzona*,<sup>20</sup> the former featuring more ecclesiastically-bound subjects and the latter subjects taken from dances. Sisman also distinguishes between two types, those with subjects in ‘*stile antico*’ and in ‘*stile moderno*’, and incorporates the concept of ‘secular counterpoint’.<sup>21</sup>

The expressive meaning of the fugue and fugato style is related—since the second half of the eighteenth century—to the considerable cultural and intellectual prestige associated with imitative counterpoint. Thus, its semantic spectrum comprises elements such as erudition and gravitas; sometimes these are associated with the ecclesiastical world, with subtle hints of an old order and skilled—even hermetic—traditions. Clearly, it also alludes to the display of wit, craftsmanship and

<sup>16</sup> For the Classical period, Sisman mentions oppositions such as galant/learned and elevated/plain. Elaine Rochelle SISMAN, *Mozart, the ‘Jupiter’ Symphony, no. 41 in C Major, K. 551*, Cambridge Music Handbooks (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 68.

<sup>17</sup> HATTEN, ‘The Troping of Topics in Mozart’s’ (see note 8), p. 514.

<sup>18</sup> Keith CHAPIN, ‘Learned Style and Learned Styles’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, edited by Danuta Mirka (New York, Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 302. The definition of styles is still a grey area within the theory of topics: it seems clear that styles can potentially overlap and that their limits are sometimes blurred.

<sup>19</sup> Wye Jamison ALLANBROOK, *The Secular Commedia: Comic Mimesis in Late Eighteenth-Century Music*, edited by Mary Ann Smart and Richard Taruskin (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2014), vol. 15, pp.110-1.

<sup>20</sup> Leonard G. RATNER, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York, Schirmer Books, 1980), pp. 260 ff.

<sup>21</sup> SISMAN, *Mozart, the ‘Jupiter’ Symphony* (see note 16), p. 70.

‘high’ compositional technique. Sisman has argued that both fugue and learned style are emblematic of an elevated style, which is connected to the aesthetic category of the ‘sublime’.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, within the European tradition, the concurrent use of the learned style with a more prosaic topic is supposed to ‘raise the dignity level’ of the latter, moving from a category of nontragic to the ‘exalted’.<sup>23</sup>

Needless to say, all these associations are also present in Argentine culture; however, the learned style in Argentine music carries further freight since, of all the mainstream topics, it is perhaps the one that spells ‘Europe’ the most.

### **Guastavino: Childhood memories and the ‘Argentinean’ voice**

Argentine composer Carlos Guastavino (1912-2000) is remembered mostly by his contribution to the so-called ‘nationalist’ school of composition.<sup>24</sup> He adamantly refused to engage with the mainstream, avant-garde, tendencies of his time, a fact that influenced his relationship with peer composers and possibly led to his progressive reclusiveness later in life. His music, however, enjoyed great success, not only in Argentina but also overseas, and somehow came to be perceived as the ‘near ideal embodiment of the spirit of Argentine musical nationalism’.<sup>25</sup>

While Guastavino should not be pigeon-holed as a ‘nationalist’ (his music and his ideology are much more nuanced than this label can convey), he clearly had a strong commitment to creating a music that could represent Argentina (as he saw it). For example, in an interview with Brígida Frías in 1954 he exhorted: ‘we need to think in Argentinean [sic] and create an Argentine art’.<sup>26</sup> The extent of his affinity with Argentine vernacular music is evident in his statement: ‘I am hopelessly in love with the folk motifs of our land and strive to pour into my music all the affection I have for my Country’.<sup>27</sup> He was also a notable pianist, who toured Argentina, as well as several countries in

<sup>22</sup> SISMAN, *Mozart, the ‘Jupiter’ Symphony* (see note 16), p. 71. Also see her more extensive ‘Learned Style and the Rhetoric of the Sublime in the “Jupiter” Symphony’, in *Wolfgang Amadè Mozart: Essays on His Life and His Music*, edited by Stanley Sadie (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 221, where she traces the elevated style back to Aristotle, Quintilian and Cicero and points out that the church style—with its intention to produce ‘exalted feelings’—was often associated with the elevated style.

<sup>23</sup> Melanie LOWE, *Pleasure and Meaning in the Classical Symphony* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2007), p. 68.

<sup>24</sup> On the complexity of Guastavino’s style and the dangers of reducing him to nationalism see Bernardo ILLARI, Silvina MANSILLA and Melanie PLESCH, ‘Guastavino, Carlos’, *Diccionario de la Música Española e Hispanoamericana* (Madrid, Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 1999) and, more recently; Bernardo ILLARI, ‘Estrategias modales de Guastavino: sus canciones tempranas’, in *Cinco estudios sobre Carlos Guastavino. Homenaje en su centenario*, edited by Silvina Mansilla (Santa Fe - Argentina, Ediciones UNL, 2015), pp. 17-59.

<sup>25</sup> ILLARI - MANSILLA - PLESCH, ‘Guastavino, Carlos’ (see note 24).

<sup>26</sup> ‘tenemos que pensar en argentino y crear un arte argentino’. Brígida FRÍAS DE LÓPEZ BUCHARDO, ‘No creo ser un genio [...] nos dice Carlos Guastavino’, *Lyra*, 11/131-3 (1954).

<sup>27</sup> ‘Soy un impenitente enamorado de los motivos folklóricos de nuestra tierra, y trato de volcar en mi música todo el cariño que siento por mi Patria’. FRÍAS DE LÓPEZ BUCHARDO, ‘No creo ser un genio’ (see note 26).

Latin America, Europe, the UK, the USSR and China.<sup>28</sup>

His vivid childhood memories seem to have had a significant influence on his music. He attended primary school at the Jesuit college of the Immaculate Conception in Santa Fe, where he was exposed to organ music. In an interview, he recalled that he learnt then to play the organ ‘with pedals and all’ and that his progress with the instrument was such that the music teacher soon left him in charge of the 9 am Mass on Sundays.<sup>29</sup>

In various interviews he mentioned the strong impression made on him as a child by an uncle who sang Argentine folk songs such as the *cielito* and the *triste*.<sup>30</sup> Also related to his childhood memories are traditional Argentine nursery rhymes, which he used in a number of works, among them his celebrated *Arroz con leche*, a four part fugue for choir based on the children’s song of the same name, and his *Diez preludios* for piano.<sup>31</sup> While this is not explicitly declared, the series—of moderate difficulty—may have been aimed at young pianists and have pedagogical intent.<sup>32</sup> Each of the ten preludes is based on a nursery rhyme, which he used to sing as a child.<sup>33</sup> In an interview with Silvina Mansilla, he stated:

These are songs that I sang when I was a child. There was no radio, no television. There were very few people who played the piano and [we], five- or six-year old children, entertained ourselves with children’s games such as rounds... games... and in those games we sang these songs... they are all from when I was a child.<sup>34</sup>

In his topical use of nursery rhymes, Guastavino joins an established tradition within Argentine art music, as references to children’s songs can be found with topical value throughout the output of

<sup>28</sup> Silvina Luz MANSILLA, *La obra musical de Carlos Guastavino. Circulación, recepción, mediaciones* (Buenos Aires, Gourmet Musical Ediciones, 2011), pp. 47 ff.

<sup>29</sup> MANSILLA, *La obra musical de Carlos Guastavino* (see note 28), pp. 44-5.

<sup>30</sup> ILLARI - MANSILLA - PLESCH, ‘Guastavino, Carlos’ (see note 24).

<sup>31</sup> The series of *Diez preludios* was premiered by the composer in Paraná (Entre Ríos), on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1952, and was published by Ricordi Americana in the same year. See MANSILLA, *La obra musical de Carlos Guastavino* (see note 28), pp. 257-8.

<sup>32</sup> In fact, Mansilla considers it part of a group of ‘didactic cycles for piano’, together with *Mis amigos* (subtitled ‘musical portraits for young pianists’) and *Cantos populares*. MANSILLA, *La obra musical de Carlos Guastavino* (see note 28), pp. 94 ff.

<sup>33</sup> The manuscript bears the subtitle ‘on themes from popular Argentine children’s songs’ [‘sobre temas de canciones populares infantiles argentinas’]. I am indebted to Edgardo Blumberg for access to photographs of the manuscript. The published score includes an explanatory note (also present in the manuscript) regarding the origin of the melodies: ‘The material for these preludes stems from the popular songs that the composer used to sing, like all children, during his childhood in Santa Fe. Some he learnt from his mother, others from children’s games’ [‘El material de estos preludios proviene de las canciones populares que el autor cantaba, como todos los niños, en su infancia en Santa Fe. Algunos le fueron enseñados por su madre y otros aprendidos en los juegos infantiles.’].

<sup>34</sup> ‘son canciones que yo canté cuando era chico. No había radio, no había televisión. Había muy poca gente que tocaba el piano y los niños de 5, 6 años nos divertíamos con juegos infantiles, como rondas... juegos... y en esos juegos cantábamos estas canciones [...] todas son de cuando era chico’, see MANSILLA, *La obra musical de Carlos Guastavino* (see note 28), p. 97.

the main nationalist composers. Taken together, they outline a topical field with multiple signifiers, some of which—notably *Arroz con leche* and *Arrozó mi niño*—seem to have been particularly favoured. Examples include Luis Gianneo’s *Obertura para una comedia infantil* (1937), Juan José Castro’s *Suite infantil* for piano (1928), and Alberto Ginastera’s *Rondó sobre temas infantiles argentinos*, also for solo piano (1947), among others. Its obvious signified points to the world of infancy and childhood memories, and allegorically to innocence, purity, and beginnings.<sup>35</sup>

### Un domingo de mañana

The eighth number of the series *Diez preludios* for solo piano, ‘Un domingo de mañana’, is a three-part fugue whose subject is a variant on the melody type usually associated in Argentina with the Pan-Hispanic romance *Las señas del esposo* (The husband’s particulars), also known as *Romance de la Catalina* (Example 1).



#### Example 1. Melody of the *Romance de la Catalina*<sup>36</sup>

This is the most widely known romance in Argentine tradition, with seventy-nine published versions dating back to at least the 1920s.<sup>37</sup> It is widespread through most of the country, including the province of Santa Fe, where—as we saw—Guastavino spent his childhood.<sup>38</sup> None of the known versions, however, contains the line ‘un domingo de mañana’. Most Argentines know this melody with the following text (or variants thereof):

<sup>35</sup> Since this topic has not been explored in depth yet, a proper exegesis might yield more nuanced interpretations. On accepted notions of child symbology in Western culture, see Alice BYRNES, *The Child: An Archetypal Symbol in Literature for Children and Adults*, American University Studies (New York, P. Lang, 1995), vol. 53.

<sup>36</sup> Gloria B. CHICOTE and Miguel A. GARCÍA, *Romances. Poesía oral de la provincia de Buenos Aires*, Estudios/ Investigaciones (La Plata, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 1996), vol. 30, p. 39.

<sup>37</sup> The earliest account is from the *Encuesta del Magisterio* of 1921, a nation-wide survey of folk traditions that remains unpublished. For a list of published versions and a study of the text variants, see Gloria B. CHICOTE, *Romancero Tradicional Argentino, Papers of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar 25* (London, Department of Hispanic Studies, Queen Mary, University of London, 2002), pp. 59 ff.

<sup>38</sup> CHICOTE, *Romancero tradicional argentino* (see note 37).

Estaba la Catalina	Catherine was sitting
sentada bajo un laurel	Under a laurel tree
mirando la frescura	Watching the freshness
de las aguas al caer.	Of the waters as they fall.

The line *Un domingo de mañana*, on the other hand, can be found as textual incipit of two other romance types: *La bella en misa* (The beauty at church) and *La esposa infiel* (The unfaithful wife). The first one appears in a romance registered by Ismael Moya:

Un domingo de mañana	On a Sunday morning
viniendo de caminante	[as I was] coming back from walking
vide estar oyendo misa	[I saw] hearing mass
una niña como un ángel. <sup>39</sup>	a girl like an angel.

The second one can be found in several documented examples, for example one collected by Juan Alfonso Carrizo in his *Cancionero popular de Catamarca*:

Un domingo de mañana	On a Sunday morning
víspera de la Asunción	the day before the Assumption
hallé mi casa enramada	I found my house decorated
con ramas de admiración. <sup>40</sup>	with branches of admiration.

Since neither the Moya nor the Carrizo versions include the music to which the poem was sung, it is not clear which one could have been the one known by Guastavino,<sup>41</sup> of all the documented examples, the Carrizo version above is the one that fits the scansion of his melody most closely (Example 2). There are, moreover, documented textual contaminations between the *La esposa infiel* and the *Romance de la Catalina* types.<sup>42</sup> All this would strongly suggest that—at least in the province of Santa Fe—the variant of *La esposa infiel* beginning with the incipit *Un domingo de mañana* was sung to the same melodic family as the *Romance de la Catalina*.

<sup>39</sup> Ismael MOYA, *Romancero* (Buenos Aires, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Buenos Aires, Instituto de Literatura Argentina, 1941).

<sup>40</sup> Juan Alfonso CARRIZO, *Antiguos cantos populares argentinos* (Buenos Aires, Silla hermanos, 1926), p. 35. Carrizo states that he documented it in 1915 and that he found similar versions in other areas.

<sup>41</sup> Chicote documents twenty-five published versions. CHICOTE, *Romancero tradicional argentino* (see note 37), p. 90.

<sup>42</sup> For example, some incipit variants of the former include lines such as ‘Estaba Catalinita, sentadita en su balcón’. CHICOTE, *Romancero tradicional argentino* (see note 37), p. 91. One variant of *Romance de la Catalina*, documented in La Rioja by Carrizo, presents substantial textual contamination from *La esposa infiel*. Juan Alfonso CARRIZO, *Cancionero popular de La Rioja* (Buenos Aires, Universidad Nacional de Tucumán, 1942), pp. 7 ff.

ANDANTE ♩ = 88

Piano

*p*

[Un do - min - go de ma - ña - na Vis-pe - ra \_\_\_ de la Asun-  
ción en-con - tré mi ca - sa en - ra - ma - da con ra - mas \_\_\_ de ad - mi - ra - ción]

**Example 2.** Carlos Guastavino, *Un domingo de mañana*, bb. 1-8, with superimposed lyrics of the *La esposa infiel* romance, in the Carrizo version

Guastavino's fugue, styled in a Baroque idiom, follows the prescriptions of the genre to almost textbook level. It begins with the statement of the subject—the romance's melody—in the lower voice, in the tonic (E minor). After the full statement, the middle voice enters with a real answer at the expected interval of a fifth above, while the first voice outlines the countersubject, characterised by a salient leap of a seventh followed by a stepwise descent. The second statement of the subject is followed by a five-bar *codetta*, drawing material from the countersubject but also introducing a new element that will return (modified) later in the piece: a *bariolage* gesture in which an upper note alternates with a chromatic descent. The third statement of the subject is presented in the upper voice at the octave above the original, appropriately accompanied by the countersubject in the second voice and a free counterpoint in the lower part. The exposition ends in bar 29, where all voices reach unison on E. The first episode modulates to the key of B minor (bb. 29-46) and elaborates on elements from the subject's consequent, which is presented in full (bb. 35-9). There follows a complete statement of the subject (bb. 46-55), carried by the middle voice, with a *stretto* in the upper part. The second episode (bb. 54-61) combines the rhythmic foot of the subject, the characteristic leap of the countersubject and the *bariolage* gesture presented in the *codetta*. A brief allusion to the BACH motive (HCAB over E) between bars 66-9 offers a further hint at the topical world alluded to in this work (Example 3).

Piano

*p*

[Un do - min - go de ma - ña - na Vis-pe - ra \_\_\_ de la Asun-  
ción en-con - tré mi ca - sa en - ra - ma - da con ra - mas \_\_\_ de ad - mi - ra - ción]

**Example 3.** Carlos Guastavino, *Un domingo de mañana*, bb. 66-9, inverted Bach motif (H-C-A-B)

The consequent half of the subject appears again, in F sharp minor, leading to an extended pedal point (bb. 71-7) which builds up to the final statement of the subject, indicated ‘*solenne*’. At this point Guastavino departs from expectations: the subject is presented in a grandiose manner, in full octaves in the lowest register of the keyboard, a bass-line strategy more characteristic of large scale *pedaliter* organ works than of a didactic piano fugue (Example 4).

**Example 4.** Carlos Guastavino, *Un domingo de mañana* bb. 77 ff., subject in *pedaliter* figure

A brief coda, with a touch of the French overture topic, leads the piece to a placid end (marked *piano*) on a reassuring *tierce de Picardie*. The same ‘*pedaliter*’ figure can also be found in the fourth movement (Fugue and finale) of Guastavino’s *Sonata for piano in C sharp minor*, to which we now turn.

### Fugue (on *Viniendo de Chilecito*)

In 1940, during a trip to the province of La Rioja, Guastavino wrote down several traditional melodies from the area. One of them is *Viniendo de Chilecito*, which he collected from ‘a group of youths’ in the town of Anillaco.<sup>43</sup> The composer would eventually use this melody in a few works: a song for voice and piano, included in his 1950 cycle *Cuatro canciones argentinas*, of which he also wrote three- and four-part versions for choir,<sup>44</sup> and the last movement of his *Sonata for piano in C sharp minor*.

*Viniendo de Chilecito* (Returning from Chilecito) partakes of the sound world of Argentina’s Western region and can be connected to two closely-related folk genres: *cueca* (a song and dance) and *tonada* (a song); it could belong to either, depending on the tempo and the type of

<sup>43</sup> MANSILLA, *La obra musical de Carlos Guastavino* (see note 28), p. 256.

<sup>44</sup> Mansilla gives as year of composition of the song cycle 1949, published by Ricordi in 1950. The four-part version for mixed choir (SATB) was published by Ricordi in 1960; the three-part version (SMC) remains unpublished, and is currently in the family archive. MANSILLA, *La obra musical de Carlos Guastavino* (see note 28).

accompaniment to which it is sung. In the solo song and choral versions, Guastavino asks for MM dotted quaver 72-6 thus placing it closer to the world of the *tonada* whereas in the sonata he requests a more vivacious *Allegreto*, MM dotted quaver 84-8, taking it closer to the *cueca*.<sup>45</sup>

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef, key of C major, 2/4 time. It contains the lyrics: "Vi-nien-do de Chi-le-ci-to En el ca-mi-no en-con-tré". Above the staff is the title "Melodía popular Riojana". The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in treble and bass clefs, key of C major, 2/4 time. It is titled "Fuga y Final.- Allegro (♩. = 84-88)". The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes, with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano).

**Example 5.** Carlos Guastavino, *Sonata in C sharp minor*. Beginning of the fourth movement, ‘Fuga y final’, as set out by the composer in the published score, presenting the vernacular melody on which the fugue is based

This vernacular genre is a lively couple dance whose choreography—like that of many Argentine dances—mimics courtship. Dancers never touch or embrace; rather, they move around in circles, the male in pursuit of the female.<sup>46</sup> Its main mood is of gaiety and animation. As a topic in art music, the *cueca*—which can be traced back to Julián Aguirre’s *Cueca* op. 61, (c. 1924),<sup>47</sup> and forward to Guastavino’s own *Mi viña de Chapanay* (1964)<sup>48</sup>—conjures the positive affects associated with light-hearted courtship. The lyrics of *Viniendo de Chilecito* reinforce the idea of courtship, as they narrate an amorous encounter between the narrating subject (who, as the title announces, is coming back from the town of Chilecito)<sup>49</sup> and a beautiful girl from La Rioja whom he finds on his way.

<sup>45</sup> This is not the place to elucidate if *Viniendo de Chilecito* in its original form is a *tonada* or a *cueca*. Guastavino’s melody, it is worth remembering, was collected in La Rioja, where the *cueca* is closer to the Chilean version of the dance than to the *cueca cuyana* or *cueca* from Cuyo. Isabel ARETZ, *Música tradicional de La Rioja* (Caracas, INIDEF, 1978); Octavio SÁNCHEZ, ‘La cueca cuyana contemporánea. Identidades sonora y sociocultural’ (Maestría en Arte Latinoamericano, Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, 2004).

<sup>46</sup> The *cueca* is part of a larger family of South American dances whose origins can be traced back to the *zamacueca* or *zambacueca*, and includes the Peruvian *marinera*, the Chilean and Argentine *cueca* and the Argentine *zamba*. See Carlos VEGA, ‘La Zamacueca (Cueca, Zamba, Chilena, Marinera)’, in *Las danzas populares argentinas, edición facsimilar del original de 1952* (Buenos Aires, Instituto Nacional de Musicología ‘Carlos Vega’, 1986), vol. 2, pp. 11-136.

<sup>47</sup> Aguirre did not date his works. According to Weiss, *Cueca* was first performed in 1924 in Tucumán. The song was published posthumously by Ricordi in 1941. Allison WEISS, ‘Action, Adaptation, and the National Sentir in the Songs of Julián Aguirre (1868-1924)’ (Master’s thesis, University of Chicago, 2009), p. 48.

<sup>48</sup> No. 12 of his *Doce canciones populares*, published by Lagos in 1968. According to Mansilla, ‘Mi viña de Chapanay’ was composed in 1964. MANSILLA, *La obra musical de Carlos Guastavino* (see note 28), p. 259.

<sup>49</sup> Chilecito is a town in the Argentine province of La Rioja, located at 29° 10’ S latitude and 67° 30’ W longitude. República Argentina. Instituto Geográfico Nacional, ‘Información Geográfica de la República Argentina’, *Mapas e información geográfica de la República Argentina*, <<http://www.ign.gov.ar/NuestrasActividades/ProduccionCartografica/Cartografia>> (accessed December 1, 2016).

Viniendo de Chilecito	Returning from Chilecito
en el camino encontré	on the way I found
a una riojana linda	a beautiful riojana [girl from La Rioja]
que ella me quiso y me enamoré.	who loved me and I fell in love.
Chilecito, flor de mi hogar,	Chilecito, flower of my home,
por donde quiera que vaya	wherever I go
de la riojana me he de acordar	I shall remember the riojana.
Chilecito, Chilecito,	Chilecito, Chilecito,
para olvidar las penas	to forget the pains
que ya me matan en Tabacal.	that now kill me in Tabacal.

The last movement of Guastavino's *Sonata for piano in C sharp minor* is a four-part fugue on *Viniendo de Chilecito*. Even though it was published in 1953, i.e. one year after the premiere of *Diez preludios*, the Sonata was apparently composed nearly a decade earlier, which suggests that the composer's interest in vernacular materials as fugue subjects remained constant throughout his creative life.<sup>50</sup> The published score has the colophon 'Buenos Aires, 1947', although in a catalogue provided by the composer to the Organization of American States, he indicated 1946 as the date of composition.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, we know that in 1944 Guastavino transcribed for orchestra a piano Sonata whose last movement was a 'brief but effective' fugue.<sup>52</sup> This work, titled *Sinfonietta Argentina*, was later destroyed by the composer.

Unlike *Un domingo de mañana*, the fugue in the piano Sonata does not present an explicit connection with the ecclesiastical world. The work is styled in a Romantic rather than Baroque idiom and the subject, fast and incisive, conveys a sense of urgency and acceleration. The learned style topic is thus here more successfully connected with Ratner's *canzona* subtype or Sisman's

<sup>50</sup> His already-mentioned *Arroz con leche* dates from 1964. MANSILLA, *La obra musical de Carlos Guastavino* (see note 28), p. 252.

<sup>51</sup> Organization of the American States, 'Carlos Guastavino', in *Compositores de América; Datos Biográficos Y Catálogos de Sus Obras. Composers of the Americas; Biographical Data and Catalogs [Sic] of Their Works* (Washington, Secretaría General, Organización de los Estados Americanos, 1955), vol. 1, p. 45. Dedicated to his friend Juan Carlos Legarre, the Sonata was performed at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires by Sigi Weissenberg on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1952. It was believed that this was the work's premiere (See MANSILLA, *La obra musical de Carlos Guastavino* (see note 28), p. 279). However, Edgardo Blumberg has found in the family archive evidence that a Sonata for piano was performed by the composer at a concert given on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1947. Announcement appeared in the newspaper *El litoral* (30<sup>th</sup> May 1947), cited in Edgardo BLUMBERG, 'Festival Centenario Carlos Guastavino 1912-2012 Discursos y notas a los conciertos' (Unpublished pre-concert talk, Santa Fe, Argentina, 2012), p. 29. I am indebted to Professor Blumberg for sharing his research with me.

<sup>52</sup> *El Federal* (15 August 1944) cited in MANSILLA, *La obra musical de Carlos Guastavino* (see note 28), p. 231. The premiere took place at the Teatro Gran Rex, in Buenos Aires, on 9th July 1944, conducted by Herman Ludwig. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

‘secular counterpoint’. Julio Ogas sees this movement as related to Brahms’s *Piano Sonata* op. 1, on the basis of its use of a ‘popular’ motif.<sup>53</sup> This connection appears somewhat weak, for Brahms’s is a theme and variations on a relatively placid subject whereas Guastavino’s is a fugue ‘*di bravura*’ that can be more easily related to the spirit of fugato finales such as that of the fourth movement (*Allegro molto*) of Beethoven’s *String Quartet* op. 59 no. 3.<sup>54</sup>

The movement presents all the expected elements of a ‘classic’ fugue, with subject entries in all the voices, elaboration of the subject by inversion and augmentation, and presence of *stretti*, but the contrapuntal style is subordinated to the romantic idiom that dominates the work, and the structure is less strict than that of *Un domingo de mañana*. The subject (the first phrase of the folk song: ‘*Viniendo de Chilecito, en el camino encontré*’) is first presented in the tenor (bb. 1-4), followed by a real answer in the alto at the upper fifth (bb. 5-8); a short transition leads to the third statement, in the soprano, at the upper octave (bb. 11-4), followed by an extended *codetta* (bb. 14-26) which includes a new statement by the alto (bb. 18-21). The statement in the fourth voice (bass), indicated ‘*marcado*’, is then presented in full octaves in the lowest region of the keyboard (bb. 26-30), in a grandiose and expansive manner (Example 6). The bass part, always in octaves, then proceeds to elaborate the subject further.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Julio OGAS, *La música para piano en Argentina (1929-1983): Mitos, tradiciones y modernidades* (Madrid, ICCMU, 2010), p. 134.

<sup>54</sup> On the use of this types of fugues in last movements see Michael TALBOT, *The Finale in Western Instrumental Music* (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 95 ff. The connection with the popular motif is also controversial: Brahms’s score indicates ‘based on an Old German Minnelied’; however, according to Paul Berry, both text and melody can be traced back to a Low Rhenish folk song called ‘*Verstohlen geht der Mond auf*’, possibly taken from the volume *Deutsche Volkslieder mit ihren Originale-Weisen* and which Brahms substantially modified. See Paul BERRY, *Brahms Among Friends: Listening, Performance, and the Rhetoric of Allusion* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 121.

<sup>55</sup> From this point onward, the octave gesture takes on a more central role, with brief presentations of the subject in octaves in the middle and upper registers (both transposed and inverted), reaching a climactic point with triple octaves, indicated ‘*violento - siempre a ritmo*’ (violent, always on time) on b. 49.

The image shows three systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, starting at measure 90, is marked 'sereno'. The second system starts at measure 92. The third system starts at measure 95. The music is in C sharp minor and 6/8 time. The bass line features a prominent figure in the lowest register, which is the subject of the fugue.

**Example 6 a-b.** Carlos Guastavino, ‘Fuga y final’, *Sonata in C Sharp minor*, *pedaliter* figures: a) bb. 26-30, b) bb. 90-7

This bass-line figure is used again towards the end of the fugue, where the subject is stated in augmentation, not once but twice (bb. 90-7). The subject is partially heard one last time in the upper voice: an ascending progression in bold chordal texture that seems to lead to a climactic point but eventually dissolves into a ‘*misterioso*’ passage that leads into the Finale.

### A learned style sub-topic

The two forceful and salient moments pointed out in *Un domingo de mañana* and the Fugue on *Viniendo de Chilecito* can be traced back to a recurring gesture in the nineteenth century piano literature: a statement of a fugue’s subject in octaves in the left hand, presented in the lowest register of the keyboard. Clear instances of this gesture can be found in the fugue of Beethoven’s *Sonata no. 31* op. 110, (bb. 72 and ff.), Schubert’s *Fugue in E minor* for piano four hands, D. 952 (bb. 89 ff., *secondo*), Mendelssohn’s *Six Preludes and Fugues* op. 35 (Fugues 1, 3 and 5), Schumann’s *Sonata Concert sans orchestra* op. 14 (*Quasi Variazioni*), and the fugue in Brahms’s *Variations on a theme by Handel* op. 24, among others.<sup>56</sup> This gesture brings to mind—and perhaps imitates—the final statement of the subject on the pedal as found in the North German organ fugues of the eighteenth century, notably J. S. Bach’s. This hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that in nineteenth-century piano transcriptions of Bach’s organ works this was the strategy of choice for the simulation of sixteen-foot organ stops (Example 7).<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> An earlier instance can be found in Mozart’s *Fantasie and Fugue* K 394 (bb. 62 ff of the fugue). I am indebted to Erin Helyard for this reference.

<sup>57</sup> Russell STINSON, *The Reception of Bach’s Organ Works from Mendelssohn to Brahms* (Oxford - New York, Oxford University Press, 2010).

I would suggest that this *pedaliter* figure constitutes a subtopic within the learned style, whose signifier—a subject entry in full octaves in the lowest area of the keyboard—invokes the final entry on the pedal in organ fugues, thus conjuring the worlds of meanings usually associated with this repertoire.

The image displays three musical excerpts, each labeled 'Piano' and numbered in a circle. Excerpt (a) shows measures 89-92 in E minor, featuring a bass line with a full-octave pedal figure. Excerpt (b) shows measures 77-79 in E minor, with a treble line featuring a complex rhythmic pattern and a bass line with a full-octave pedal figure. Excerpt (c) shows measures 101-103 in E-flat major, with a treble line featuring a complex rhythmic pattern and a bass line with a full-octave pedal figure. Dynamics such as *ff*, *f*, *rf*, and *p* are indicated throughout the score.

**Example 7 a-c.** Instances of the *pedaliter* figure: a) Franz Schubert, *Fugue in E minor* for piano four hands, D. 952, bb. 89 ff., *secondo*); b) Felix Mendelssohn, *Fugue no. 1*, from *Six preludes and fugues* op. 35, bb. 77 ff.; c) Ludwig van Beethoven, *Sonata no. 31*, op. 110, Fugue, bb. 72 ff.

## Meanings and interpretations

The interaction of the topics of the learned style, with the children's song in *Un domingo de mañana* and the *cueca* in the Fugue in the piano Sonata, present us with a multitude of oppositions: high-low, artificial-natural, religious-secular, complex-simple, vocal-instrumental, vernacular-European, private-public. What meaning emerges from these oppositions? Is it possible to isolate a unique, emergent meaning?

The learned style brings in the idea of the venerable tradition of counterpoint, with its connotations of high or 'elevated' style, the complexity and erudition inherent in its highly-regulated procedures, and the conscious artificiality of its rhetoric. There is a further tweak in these works, since, as mentioned before, the idea of Europe and European culture is part of the symbolic freight of the learned style in Argentina. In the examples analysed here we have, on the one hand, references to the tradition of the Baroque keyboard fugue and, on the other, a clear gesture towards the monumental piano fugues of the nineteenth century. These references point not only to a past temporal space, but to a specific geographic and cultural sphere: western Europe.

From a rhetorical point of view, the nursery rhyme is the quintessence of the *stilus humilis*, with the fugue clearly representing the *stilus gravis*. Guastavino's delicate construction of meaning in *Un domingo de mañana* involves both. The children's song—whose title, it is worth remembering, means 'A Sunday morning'—brings forth the generic idea of infancy but also, for the composer, memories of his own childhood, which included—as we saw—the playing of organ music. The combination of the Baroque style in which the fugue is cast, the reference to the BACH motif, the indication *solemne* and the *pedaliter* topic towards the end clearly point to the ecclesiastical world with which organ fugues are usually connected in Argentine imagination. In sum, we are reminded of the world of the church, to which the child perhaps goes... on a Sunday morning.

The Fugue in the last movement of the *Sonata for piano in C sharp minor* does not lend itself to such straightforward interpretations. In rhetorical terms, the fugue is suited to the *peroratio* expected in a last movement since the learned style appeals 'to both intellect and imagination'.<sup>58</sup> The work combines the euphoric, positive affects of courtship brought in by the topic of the *cueca* with the seriousness of its contrapuntal treatment, to which is added the Romantic and agitated nature of some of the episodes. The treatment of keyboard writing—even the use of the *pedaliter* topic—is aligned with that of the great nineteenth-century piano tradition. It is interesting to note

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<sup>58</sup> Sisman argues this point in connection to the fugue in Mozart's Jupiter symphony. SISMAN, *Mozart, the 'Jupiter' Symphony* (see note 16), p. 71.

that the vernacular topic does not suffer any interference, not even from its countersubject, which has a very low thematic definition. Furthermore, it is impossible to separate the topic of the *cueca* from that of its learned style treatment. This strategy could be indicative of what Guastavino may have meant by ‘writing in Argentinean’: a space in which both European and local traditions could establish a dialogue on equal terms. The concurrent use of vernacular topics with the learned style, which recurs—as mentioned—throughout his creative life, may have been one of the solutions he found for this predicament.

What is the ‘emergent meaning’ from this combination? Is there one to be found? Depending on one’s perspective, these examples could be interpreted as different ‘tropes’. Some might consider that the dissonance between both topics remains. They will see in their combination an attempt to ‘elevate’ the Latin American vernacular to the heights of the European ‘sublime’. Bach lovers, for example, might see these works as a rather quaint testimony to Bach’s long-lasting influence even over such a distant corner of the world as South America. Argentine flag-wavers, on the other hand, might see them as a vindication of Argentine folk music, an eloquent proof that ‘our’ music can become the subject of a fugue. To all of them, the trope is irony.

Alternatively, we could consider that the dissonance between European and Argentine topics has resolved. As I hope my analysis has shown, in his combination of European and Argentine topics Guastavino articulated elements of his personal, biographical and ideological worlds: his vivid childhood memories, his strong affinity with the piano repertoire of the nineteenth century, and his firm convictions about the identity of Argentine art music. In this light, and in line with the quote from Borges that opens this article, he is not trying to ‘raise the dignity level’ of Argentine vernacular music with a fugal treatment but inviting us to consider the ‘Argentine’ potential of European music. In this view, the trope is metaphor.

In sum, the meaning/s that emerge from the simultaneous use of contrasting European and vernacular topics are neither fixed nor stable: they are open and depend on the interpreting subject. It is not possible to isolate a unique ‘emergent meaning’; rather, we are confronted with the fact that—as Monelle reminded us—music is, ultimately, an ‘allegory of listening’, i.e. an allegory of our impossibility of attaining a definitive interpretation.

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