

1-28-2012

Extended Program Notes for Thesis Voice Recital

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DOI: 10.25148/etd.FI12061101

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

EXTENDED PROGRAM NOTES FOR THESIS VOICE RECITAL

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

by

John Jairo Cogollo

2012

To: Dean Brian D. Schriener
College of Architecture and the Arts

This thesis, written by John Jairo Cogollo, and entitled Extended Program Notes for Thesis Voice Recital, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

Joel Galand

Robert Dundas

Kathleen Wilson, Major Professor

Date of Defense: January 28, 2012

The thesis of John Jairo Cogollo is approved.

Dean Brian D. Schriener
College of Architecture and the Arts

Dean Lakshmi N. Reddi
University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2012

DEDICATION

To my parents and

Dr. Kathleen Wilson

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

EXTENDED PROGRAM NOTES FOR THESIS VOICE RECITAL

by

John Jairo Cogollo

Florida International University, 2012

Miami, Florida

Professor Kathleen Wilson, Major Professor

This thesis presents the compact disc recording of my 60-minute vocal master's recital, accompanied by extended program notes providing historical background and analysis of the following repertoire for bass baritone: Großer Herr, o starker König from Weihnachts Oratorium by J.S. Bach; W.A. Mozart's aria Madamina, il catalogo è questo from Don Giovanni; Songs and Dances of Death by Modest Moussorgsky; three French art songs by Camille Saint-Saëns; three Argentine art songs by Carlos Guastavino; and the aria Shake the Heavens from El Niño by contemporary American composer John Adams. This repertoire is in five languages and was carefully selected to display different styles from four different centuries.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. J.S. BACH: Großer Herr, o starker König from <i>Weihnachts Oratorium</i>	1
II. W.A.MOZART: Madamina, il catalogo é questo from <i>Don Giovanni</i>	4
III. MODEST PETROVICH MOUSSORGSKY: <i>Songs and Dances of Death</i>	8
IV. CAMILLE SAINT SAËNS: Clair de Lune, Si vous n'avez rien a me dire, Danse Macabre.....	13
V. CARLOS GUASTAVINO: San Pedrino, Pampamapa, Milonga de dos hermanos.....	17
VI. JOHN ADAMS Shake the Heavens from <i>El Niño</i>	21
REFERENCES.....	23

Chapter I

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Weihnachts Oratorium

“Großer Herr, o starker König”

After the death of his wife, Maria Barbara Bach in 1724, J.S. Bach resigned from his position as Kapellmeister at the court of Prince Leopold in Köthen. He was appointed Kantor at the Thomasschule and Music Director of the four principal churches in Leipzig.¹ In 1729, Bach became director of the Leipzig Collegium Musicum, where he had the opportunity to compose and perform more secular music. During those years, Bach wrote secular cantatas of substantial proportion—both musically and dramatically—that resemble the genre of chamber opera. These secular works, known as *drammi per musica*, use characters drawn mainly from Greek mythology. As Geck describes it: “In the Leipzig secular works, Bach is able to make this genre completely his own, and thus can be receptive, more than in his sacred music, to a galant and sentimental style (Geck, 2000).” Although these works enjoyed much success, Bach continued to write sacred music. His secular vocal music was just another dimension of his vast compositional output.

In 1734, Bach compiled choruses and arias from his secular cantatas to create a large sacred work for the six feast days between 25 December 1734 and 6 January 1735. Music “recycling” was a common practice for Bach, either to accommodate a special

¹ Christoph Wolff, et al. "Bach." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40023pg10> (accessed October 10, 2011).

event or simply to rescue earlier works from oblivion; these recycled works were called parody music (Geck, 2000). Bach used the opening choruses and eight arias from the following secular cantatas: *Laßt uns sorgen, laßt uns wachen*, BWV 213, (“Let us tend him, let us watch him”); *Tönet, ihr Pauken! Erschallet, Trompeten*, BWV 214 (“Sound, all ye drums now, Resound, all ye trumpets”); and *Preise dein Glücke, gesegnetes Sachsen*, BWV 215 (“Praise now thy blessings, O fortunate Saxony”). Bach provided cohesiveness to the work by adding *accompagnati* recitatives—declamatory singing accompanied by the orchestra—to precede the arias and chorals. Not all of the music parodied existing works. He wrote a new pastorale for the opening number of the second part and a new chorale for the finale of the fifth part (Geck, 2000). The oratorio was premiered during the six feast days in December and January 1734–35 at the St. Thomas and St. Nicholas churches in Leipzig—in some days it was performed the same day at both institutions.

“Großer Herr, o starker König” (“Great Lord, O mighty King”) is a parody of the bass aria “Kron' und Preis gekronter Damen” (“Crown and price crowned ladies”) from the cantata *Tönet, ihr Pauken! Erschallet, Trompeten*, BWV 214 (“Sound, all ye drums now, Resound, all ye trumpets”). Although the source of the text is unknown, it is commonly speculated to be the work of the German poet and cantata librettist Christian Friedrich Henrici, also known as Picander (Geck 2000). The aria is divided into two parts: the first in D Major and the second in B Minor. The first part is repeated to end the piece. This type of composition, usually pairing the relative major/minor keys, is known as the *da capo* aria or ABA form. It is written for solo bass, trumpet, flute, strings and continuo. The entire aria is unified by means of the following rhythmic motive:

eighth-quarter-eighth

The strings are the first to present the motive by outlining a descending D-Major chord, which is immediately repeated by the trumpet in the next phrase. The figure keeps reappearing in all the parts throughout the piece. Example 1 shows the first appearance of the motive in the strings, immediately imitated in measure four by the trumpet.

The image shows a musical score for six instruments: Tromba, Violino I, Violino II, Viola, Basso, and Continuo. The score is in 2/4 time and D major. The first four measures show the initial appearance of a descending D-major chord motive. In measure 4, the Tromba part imitates the strings. The Continuo part provides a steady bass line. The Viola and Violino parts play the descending chord outline, while the Violino I part has a more melodic line.

Example 1: “Großer Herr, o starker König,” mm. 1–7

Chapter II

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

“Madamina, il catalogo è questo” from Don Giovanni

Don Giovanni is the second of the Mozart-Da Ponte operatic trilogy—the first being *Le nozze di Figaro* and the last *Così fan tutte*. They first collaborated on da Ponte’s adaptation of *Le mariage de Figaro*, a play by French playwright Pierre Beaumarchais. The controversial content of the play—the social clash between the aristocracy and the lower classes—caused it to be banned by Louis XVI in France.² The Austrian Emperor Joseph II permitted the new adaptation not only because da Ponte diminished the play’s controversial content, but to “teach the nobility the political lesson that a servant can assert his rights against his master” (Könemann, 2005). The success of *Le nozze di Figaro* led to a new collaboration, this time with the famous Don Juan as the protagonist.

The first known play about the legend of Don Juan is *El burlador de Sevilla* (The scoundrel of Seville) by Spanish dramatist Tirso de Molina (1584–1648). The play narrates the story of a young noble man whose obsession with women brings him to his own death. Da Ponte’s libretto is based on Giuseppe Gazzaniga’s *Don Giovanni Tenorio* ossia *Il convitato di pietra* (Don Giovanni Tenorio or the stone guest) with text by Giovanni Bertati (Könemnn 2005). In da Ponte’s setting, Don Giovanni, a master of seduction, tries to escape from the Commandant’s house after raping his daughter, Donna Anna—the actual fact of the raping is open to debate since the only thing the audience

² Cliff Eisen, et al. "Mozart." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40258pg3> (accessed October 7, 2011).

sees is Donna Anna chasing the Don out to the courtyard. The Commandant comes to Donna Anna's rescue and engages Don Giovanni in a sword fight that ends with the commandant's death. Towards the end of the opera, a memorial statue of the Commandant comes to life and asks the Don to repent his sins. When the Don refuses, the stone statue drags him down to hell.

Mozart's Don Giovanni is a two-act drama giocoso—a comic opera that contains tragic features. The opera premiered in Prague on 29 October 1787 after being postponed twice—known as a procrastinator but a fast worker, Mozart composed the overture the night before the premiere (Boyden, 2002). Although the opera was not easy to digest at first because of its content and its complex music, Don Giovanni had great success and received more performances than *Le nozze di Figaro*. The famous overture is one of the most shocking features of the opera. It starts in D minor—completely opposite from his past overtures written in major keys—with sustained chords, followed by a sinister passage in syncopated rhythms that foreshadows the *ombra* scene where the statue of the commandant arrives at the Don's house in response to a supper invitation the don had uttered in jest.

“Madamina, il catalogo è questo” (“Little lady, this is the catalog”) is Mozart's most famous bass aria. The aria is sung by Leporello—the Don's servant—early in the first act. After the Don sneaks away from Donna Elvira (one of his many conquests), Leporello enlightens the troubled woman by showing her the catalog of Giovanni's conquests: six hundred and forty in Italy, two hundred and thirty-one in Germany, one hundred in France, ninety-one in Turkey, and a mere one thousand and three in Spain. Instead of the usual slow-fast division of the classical aria, Mozart inverts the order

presenting the fast section before the slow one. This inversion works dramatically in that during the fast section, Leporello presents the catalog and lists the many women of different social classes that the Don has had. During the slow section, Leporello describes what attracts the Don in different types of women: the kindness of the blonde, the faithfulness of the brunette, the sweetness of the fair one, the majestic, the little ones, thin, young, even the old, but best of all “those who are just beginning.” As Leporello quips: “It does not matter as long as she wears a skirt!”

Mozart’s genius at using orchestral resources for dramatic emphasis is present throughout the aria. When Leporello is turning the catalog’s pages and listing how many women the Don has in each country, the flutes have an ascending and descending passage that sounds like laughter. The mockery continues in a later passage where the violin’s descending line is immediately imitated with an ascending line by the basses (Example 2).

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Flute I

Flute II

Oboe

Bassoon

Horn

Leporello

Bass

me! durch! In I - ta - lia sei cen - to e qua - ran - ta, in Al - magna duecento e trent'
 Hier vier - hundert im feu - ri - gen Welschland, da nur hundert im köl - te - ren

Example 2: “Madamina, il catalogo è questo” mm. 16–23

Chapter III

MODEST PETROVICH MOUSSORGSKY

Songs and Dances of Death

During the post-Wagnerian era, the last decades of the nineteenth-century were marked by the growth of nationalism, which in Eastern Europe and Russia inspired composers to synthesize Western European musical structures with traditional, local folk styles. Post-Romantic composers took different paths—some continued to exploit Wagner’s expanded tonalities while drawing on their folk traditions mainly for *couleur locale*, and some went back to their own roots in the quest for a nationalistic musical style of their own (Stolba, 1998). In Russia, the pioneers of nationalism was a group of five composers known as the “Mighty Handful”—Mili Balakirev, Cesar Cui, Modest Moussorgsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Alexander Borodin.

It was Balakirev’s belief that Western European compositional practice was to be observed but not followed. As a teacher, mentor, and leader, he conveyed this belief to the rest of the group and to his students. With this in mind, the group adhered to the following principles: The music of the Russian people—religious and folk—should be used as a basis for art music. German counterpoint and other Western European compositional techniques might be ignored to allow a composer more freedom in creating art music. The spirit and style of the nineteenth-century Romanticism was favored and Classicism rejected. Realism was advocated—the term Realism in music applies to

operas and songs where the plot or characters are said to be ‘true to life’ as distinct from remote or mythical.³

Modest Moussorgsky was the most nationalistic of the group. Even before commencing formal compositional studies, he was well acquainted with Russian folklore. Throughout the years he used folk elements as accessories in his compositions. The most prominent avant-garde element exploited by Moussorgsky was realism—depicting the lives and experiences of common people realistically rather than symbolically (Kimball, 1996). He conceived every song as a monodrama, using compositional devices such as chromaticism, modality, and extended chords. However, the most “realistic” aspect in his songs was the use of uneven phrases and freedom in the melodic line to imitate the inflection of the Russian language—by doing this he achieved speech-like phrases.

Songs and Dances of Death is a four-song cycle about the struggle between man and death. Each song is a miniature drama that describes how Death claims a victim in a different situation. In the first song, “Lullaby,” a mother tries to get her ill child to sleep. Since she is not successful at calming the child’s cry, Death knocks at the door and offers to sing the baby to sleep. In the second song, “Serenade,” Death takes the role of a lover serenading a dying maiden. In the third song, “Trepak,” Death dances with a drunken man during a blizzard, until the man collapses on the snow and falls into eternal sleep. The last song, “The Field Marshal,” describes Death’s arrival on a battlefield in order to assemble his troops.

³ *Oxford Dictionary of Music Online*, s.v. “Realism.”

Of the four songs, “Lullaby” is the most realistic in style. Moussorgsky combines frantic, speech-like phrases from the desperate mother with slow and soothing melodies from Death. The mother’s lines are fast, full of leaps between notes and chromatic (moving by half steps) over dissonant harmonies. Conversely, Death lines are slow and lyrical, supported only by accompanimental chords. This interpenetration of melody and speech exemplifies perfectly Moussorgsky’s avid use of realism in his songs. The song starts with an ascending line that suggests the key of F# minor with a raised B#. This languid scale paints a picture of an anguished mother trying to console her sick child. Death repeats a melody of triplets four times throughout the song as the lullaby for the dying child. The last instance of the melody changes to a short, low A that symbolizes the death of the child (Example 3).

The image shows a musical score for the song "Lullaby" by Moussorgsky, measures 51-54. The score is in F# minor, 3/4 time, and includes a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Lento tranquillo" and "rall.". The lyrics are: "ю! — Ви-дишь, уе-нул он под ти-хо-е пе-нье. Ба-юш-ки, ба-ю, ба-ю." The piano part features a triplet melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with dynamics ranging from piano (p) to pianissimo (ppp).

Example 3: “Lullaby,” mm. 51–54

“Serenade” is the most lyrical of the four songs. This song and “Trepak” bring the Russian dance element to the cycle. On this occasion, Death is disguised as a serenading lover. Death’s luring song gets to the ears of a consumptive girl. The weak girl cannot resist such passionate song and finally gives in to Death’s embrace. The introduction of the song, in a 2/4 meter, describes the sleepless, ill girl on a dark spring night. The languid melody is supported by a dissonant harmony expressed in sixteenth notes. The lover’s serenade begins with a metric change to 6/8 with an accompaniment of a quarter note and an eighth note for each beat. Such accompaniment imitates a stringed instrument and supports a very lyrical melody. The melody repeats with variations and asymmetrical phrases throughout Death’s serenade. There is a climatic point with a modulation from E-flat minor to G-flat major that helps emphasize Death’s seductive words.

The *Grove Dictionary Online* defines the Trepak as a Cossack dance in rapid duple time (performed mostly by men) that features the prisiadka—executed by kicking from a squatting position. Examples of this dance can be found in Tchaikovsky’s *Nutcracker*.⁴ During the song “Trepak,” the *trepak* dance rhythm is repeated in different lengths and variations, with the meter frequently changing from 4/4 to 3/2. These metric changes help set the text asymmetrically, making the phrases sound declamatory and unstable—perfect for depicting a drunkard. In the midst of a blizzard, Death accompanies the drunkard and invites him to dance. As the drunkard becomes exhausted, Death invites him to lie down on a snow bed and promises to keep him warm. Death then invokes the elements to cover the drunkard into a snow tomb. Most of “Trepak’s” motivic ideas

⁴ *Grove Music Online*, s.v.

“Trepak,” http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.fiu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/28327?q=trepak&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit [accessed October 5, 2011].

derive from the famous Dies Irae (Day of Wrath)—a section of the plainchant requiem mass attributed to Thomas of Celano [*d c.*1250]⁵—that was set by other composers like Berlioz in his *Symphonie Fantastique* and Saint-Saëns in his *Danse Macabre* (Brown, 1975).

The last song of the set, “The Field Marshal,” differs from the previous three in that at least half of it is narrative. The chaos of war—canons thundering, soldiers charging, and horses neighing—is vividly expressed by the starkly rhythmical accompaniment. The accompaniment starts with repeating triplets that support the declamatory narration. When the night comes and the battle ends, leaving only the moaning of dying soldiers, Death arrives as a field marshal to assemble his troops. Circling the field and inventorying his troops as he reaches the top of the hill, Death begins his oration:

“The battle is over. I have vanquished you all!
All you warriors I have humbled before me.
Life led you asunder, I have brought you together.
Arise now for my inspection, all of you who have fallen!
Pass before me in a solemn march.
I wish to count my troops.
Then lay your bones down in the earth
And forget this life in sweet slumber.
Years and years will pass unnoticed,
And men will lose all memory of you.
But I will not forget! Loudly above you
I will conduct a feast at the midnight hour.
I will tamp down the earth in a ponderous dance,
So that the gloom of death will never be cast off by your bones;
So that you never again will arise from the earth!”⁶

⁵ “Dies Irae.” In *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. rev., edited by Michael Kennedy. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e2956> (accessed October 6, 2011).

⁶ Translation by Lawrence R. Richter.

Chapter IV

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

“Clair de lune,” “Si vous n'avez rien à me dire,” and “Danse Macabre.”

Camille Saint-Saëns was one of the most prolific French composers of the late nineteenth-century with a catalog of over 120 songs written for voice and piano as well as voice and orchestra. He composed five symphonies (only the first three were published), many chamber works, thirteen operas (only *Samson et Dalila* survives as standard repertoire), chorales, sacred chamber and vocal music, and incidental music for film. Saint-Saëns was the first French composer to write symphonic poems: *Le Rouet d'Omphale* (1871), *Phaëton* (1873), *Danse macabre* (1874), and *La jeunesse d'Hercule* (1877). These symphonic poems are full of lyrical melodic content, strong in construction, and brilliantly orchestrated, setting a new standard for French music and influencing young composers like Ravel.⁷

Saint-Saëns studied Gottfried Weber's principles of harmonic theory with Pierre Maleden—these principles advocated a less strict approach to the treatment of altered chords and resolution of dissonance (Stolba, 1998). Although his strength lies in the use of colorful harmonic structures, Saint-Saëns never left his musical parameters to give in to the new Impressionistic movement of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century—thus considered a conservative composer. He achieves his musical imagery by means of modality, modulations, and chordal harmony. These traits and his mastery of counterpoint are present throughout his orchestral music and his song catalog.

⁷ Sabina Teller Ratner, et al. "Saint-Saëns, Camille." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/24335> (accessed October 3, 2011).

Saint-Saëns wrote songs using poems by many poets from Victor Hugo to Pierre de Ronsard—he also set his own verses. “Clair de lune” is a setting of a poem by Catulle Mendès. The song narrates a dream about a man walking through a forest. As he walks, he sees the frail image of his beloved. She joins him and walks next to him incessantly. The dream is musically described by an arpeggiated accompaniment in fourths and fifths, which gives the song the sense of uncertainty. This sense is heightened by a syncopation from a beautiful arched shaped phrase that starts in the third beat of the second measure and ties into the next measure. He doubles the vocal melody in the accompaniment over chord inversions. Altered chords—mostly added seventh, fully diminished and half diminished chords—are frequently used to add color to the song. These different harmonic colors are achieved through dissonances with unusual resolutions.

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of "Clair de lune" by Saint-Saëns. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked "Poco allegretto". The vocal line begins with a rest in the first measure, then enters in the second measure with the lyrics "Dans la forêt que crée". The piano accompaniment features an arpeggiated texture, with the right hand playing chords and the left hand playing a melodic line in fourths and fifths. The dynamics are marked "pp" (pianissimo). The score includes performance instructions such as "sotto voce" and "Ped." (pedal).

Example 4: “Clair de lune,” mm. 1–4

"Si vous n'avez rien à me dire" is a perfect example of Saint-Saëns' dexterity of harmonic treatment. This song is a setting of the famous French romantic composer Victor Hugo (1802–1885). Although Saint-Saëns states the key of A Major, the chord of E major is arpeggiated followed by a B-minor seventh chord—thus suggesting the

Myxolydian mode by means of a lowered D. This sonority is restated by the melody, which outlines an E-major scale. This song differs from the others in that it has a small piano interlude with a melody marked as *dolcissimo* (very sweetly). This is one of the few instances where the accompaniment is in the key of A major. After the piano interlude, the song modulates to F# minor—the relative key—to emphasize the words "If you do not have anything to teach me, why do you hold my hand?" The song ends with a piano postlude that finally resolves to A major.

Saint-Saëns wrote "Danse Macabre" in 1872 using the poetry of contemporary poet Henri Cazalis. The poem and music are also inspired from the *Dies Irae*.⁸ The song starts with a tritone or a "Diabolus in Musica"(the Devil in music) as it was named medieval times—later in the symphonic poem the tritone is played by violins in *scordatura*, where the E string is lower a half step to play the tritone in open strings. The poem begins with the words "Zig et zig et zig" mimicking death's shrills on his violin. In this setting, Death is depicted as a skeleton playing his violin to raise the dead and make them dance in fraternal unity. The song is unified by a recurring theme of four eighth notes and one quarter note in both the melody and the accompaniment.

⁸ "Dies Irae." In *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. rev., edited by Michael Kennedy. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e2956> (accessed October 2, 2011).

Mouv^t de Valse.

PIANO.

Zig et zig et zig, La mort en ca-dence Frappant u-ne tombe avec son ta-

Example 4: "Danse macabre," mm. 1–12

The first phrase presents the above mentioned rhythmic theme followed by a descending chromatic line. Saint-Saëns modulates briefly from G minor to the dominant key of D major still keeping the rhythmic motive in the melody and accompaniment. He repeats the same twice, this time with an abbreviated first phrase. Now he presents an abbreviated version of the introduction with the tritones. As Death is playing and the skeletons are dancing in a circle, the song is abruptly interrupted by the song of the cock. The song ends with the words "Oh beautiful night for the poor of the world. And long live Death and equality" with only chords in the accompaniment, followed by a short version of the main theme in a forte dynamic. The song proved to be so successful that Saint-Saëns converted it into one of his four famous symphonic poems two years later.

Chapter V

CARLOS GUASTAVINO

Canciones Populares

“San Pedrino,” “Pampamapa,” and “Milonga de dos Hermanos”

During the early twentieth century, nationalism in music was already explored in Latin America. Argentinean composer Carlos Guastavino (1912) was born during this period. Musicologist, composer, and guitarist Jonathan Kulp conveniently divides Guastavino’s song output into two periods—the period between 1939 and 1962 and the period between 1963 and 1975.⁹ During the first period, his style was of formal character that displayed traces of Impressionism and the influences of Manuel de Falla and Isaac Albeniz.¹⁰ Vocal lyricism came naturally to Guastavino and is present in both his instrumental and vocal music. In his second compositional period (1963–1975), Guastavino adopted a more nationalistic style of writing. He used mostly folkloric elements for his songs—Argentinean dances, popular songs, poetry. He was not the only nationalistic composer of the time, his contemporary Alberto Ginastera (1916–83) was also drawing from Argentine traditions as it is expressed in his *Canciones Argentinas*—a five-song cycle derived from Argentine dances.

Some characteristics that made Guastavino’s popular songs “popular” are: the use of popular rhythms, the songs are harmonically accessible and simple, the use of strophic form—a song composed of verses with a repeating refrain. Since popular poetry was

⁹ “Carlos Guastavino: The Intersection of *música culta* and *música popular* in Argentine Song.” *Latin-American Music Review* 24/1 (Spring 2003): 42-61.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

mainly written in four to six stanzas with a refrain between verses, it was easy to set them to music in strophic form. The topic of this poetry varied from Argentine nature to more nostalgic and languid content—death, loneliness, lost love, lost of hope.¹¹

“Milonga de dos hermanos”(“Milonga of two brothers”) and “La tempranera”(The early bird)—both written in 1963—represent the beginning of Guastavino’s second period of song writing. “Milonga de dos hermanos” narrates the story of two brothers who were assassins and who were competing about how many murders they have committed. When the older brother noticed that the younger brother had more murders, he decides to end the competition by killing his own brother. This kind of story goes very well with the milonga style of song. The milonga is a type of folk song from the late nineteenth century that derives from the Spanish habanera.¹² The most notable aspect of the milonga is its rhythmic structure—written in duple meter with two dotted eighth notes and an eighth note.



Example 5: Milonga rhythmic pattern

“El Sampedrino” (“The man from San Pedro”) and “Pampamapa” (“Map of the plains”) are both derived from the huella. The huella is both a song and a dance style from the province of Buenos Aires and its surroundings.¹³ It is characterized by

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Aretz, Isabel. *El folklore musical argentino*. Buenos Aires: Ricordi Americana, 1952.

¹³ Ibid.

alternating 6/8 and 3/4 meters and it is accompanied by guitar rasgueado or strumming. The vocal melody starts in the second eighth note of the first beat.¹⁴

The image contains two musical staves. The left staff is titled "Typical guitar rhythms" and shows a sequence of chords in 6/8 time, with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The right staff is titled "Typical voice rhythms" and shows a vocal line in 6/8 time, starting on a G4 note, with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics "Que se a-bra la tie - rra y" are written below the notes.

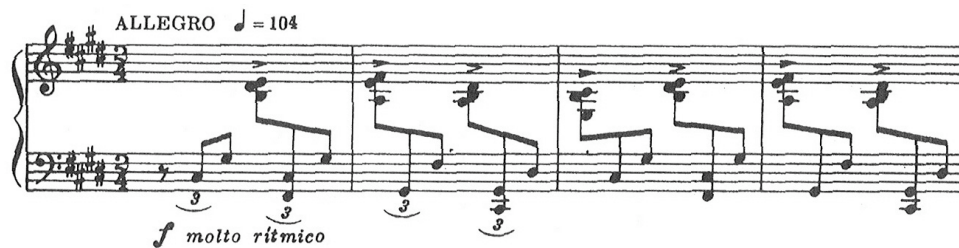
Example 6: Huella guitar and voice pattern.¹⁵

“San Pedrino” narrates the story of a man from San Pedro that longs for his lost love. The sparse, rasgueado-like accompaniment supports a long-phrased and languid vocal melody. In the refrain or estribillo, a modulation to D Major takes place and the whole atmosphere of the song changes. Such changes include a more lyrical accompaniment that doubles the vocal melody. The refrain is the protagonist’s reminiscence of better times next to her beloved.

“Pampamapa” also derives from the huella. Unlike San Pedrino, both accompaniment and vocal lines are more intricate. The song starts with a brisk piano prelude marked as Allegro—this interlude is a combination of arpeggiated or broken chords in triplets and accented chords in the strong beats. This type of accompaniment imitates a guitar strumming.

¹⁴ “Carlos Guastavino: The Intersection of *música culta* and *música popular* in Argentine Song.” *Latin-American Music Review* 24/1 (Spring 2003): 42-61.

¹⁵ Aretz, Isabel. *El folklore musical argentino*. Buenos Aires: Ricordi Americana, 1952.



Example 7: "Pampamapa" mm. 1-4

Later in the song, this prelude becomes an interlude in between verses. The tempo changes during the verses by means of a meno (less) marking. The vocal line is written in long phrases with a climatic point during the refrain. Unlike the other songs written in strophic form, the refrain in "Pampamapa" has two different texts. The only repeating texts are two stanzas at the end of the song—"Let's go, my land, so sleepless. I will give you my dreams, give me your calmness.

Chapter VI

JOHN ADAMS

"Shake the Heavens" from *El Niño*

Pulitzer prize winner John Coolidge Adams is by far one of the most prolific and frequently performed American contemporary composer. Among his many compositions are works for both chamber and full orchestra, choral works, electronic music, film soundtracks, five operas, and *El Niño* (*The Child*), which is a hybrid between opera and oratorio. John Adams studied composition at Harvard while the Serialist musical movement—atonal music made out of twelve rows of random pitches—was at its peak in the United States. His time at Harvard was not as productive because of Adam's lack of interest in twelve-tone composition. It was not until he discovered Minimalism that he started developing a style of his own. Adams was exposed to Minimalism through works by minimalist composers, like Steve Reich. In fact, Adams was considered the "fifth minimalist" after Young, Riley, Reich, and Glass—all minimalists (Gann, 1997).

Although conceived as a nativity oratorio, *El Niño* can be performed fully staged or as a concert—this is what makes the work a hybrid between opera and oratorio since an oratorio is usually not staged. The work is two hours long with text by several writers and sources—from biblical text by Haggai and Isaiah to Mexican poems by Rosario Castellanos and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. The music has minimalist characteristics like repeating rhythmic patterns and textures, but instead of becoming stagnant, it moves by means of melodic content and various orchestral configurations (Boyden, 2002).

It requires large orchestral forces—two piccolo flutes, one oboe, one English horn, one clarinet, one bass clarinet, one bassoon, one contrabassoon, three horns, three trombones, percussion (glockenspiel, triangles, gong, almglocken, guiro, maracas, crotales, high cowbells, temple block, tam-tam, chimes, claves, two temple bowls), two guitars, harp, piano, celesta, sampler, strings, mixed chorus, children's chorus, three countertenors, and soprano, mezzo-soprano, and baritone or bass baritone soloists.¹⁶

Shake the Heavens is a bass baritone aria with text from the Old Testament book of Haggai:

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts:
Yet once a little while
And I will shake the heavens and the earth,
The sea and the dry land.
And I will shake all nations,
And the desire of all nations shall come.

The same text is used in the recitative that precedes the first bass aria of Handel's *Messiah* ("Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts"). With this in mind, we can say that Adams' *Shake the Heavens* is a perfect example of neo-classical (even neo-Baroque) writing. Similarities would include the use of melismas, which are the repetition of several notes in the same syllable of a word. The melismas (commonly known as runs) in both Handel's and Adams' pieces take place on the first syllable of the word "shake"—an example of word painting. The aria exploits repetitive rhythmic patterns as a minimalist resource. These repeated patterns are temporally staggered among the instruments in the orchestra, producing a chaotic texture that symbolizes the end of days.

¹⁶ "El Niño." In *John Adams Official Website*, <http://www.earbox.com/W-elnino.html> (accessed October 2, 2011).

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