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Colombian Jazz dance suite : a synthesis of the music of the colombian andes and modern jazz

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

COLOMBIAN JAZZ DANCE SUITE:

A SYNTHESIS OF THE MUSIC OF THE COLOMBIAN ANDES AND MODERN
JAZZ

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

by

Alvaro Bermudez

2007

To: Dean Juan Antonio Bueno
College of Architecture and the Arts

This thesis, written by Alvaro Bermudez, and entitled Colombian Jazz Dance Suite: a Synthesis of the Music of the Colombian Andes and Modern Jazz, 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.

Mike Orta

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Sam Lussier, Major Professor

Date of Defense: July 20th, 2007

The thesis of Alvaro Bermudez is approved.

Dean Juan Antonio Bueno
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Florida International University, 2007

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS
COLOMBIAN JAZZ DANCE SUITE:
A SYNTHESIS OF THE MUSIC OF THE COLOMBIAN ANDES AND
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Alvaro Bermudez

Florida International University, 2007

Miami, Florida

Professor Sam Lussier, Major Professor

This thesis is an attempt to unite two distinct and dissimilar musical genres, the music of the Colombian Andes and modern jazz. The compositions to be analyzed in this thesis are meant to function as parts of a whole. Thus, they will be linked by thematic and rhythmic material. In their entirety the pieces will form a suite of dances not unlike those of Baroque composers, with titles that denote the name of the particular air being employed by the composer, who is also the author of this thesis. These individual dances are orchestrated for a jazz ensemble consisting of piano, string bass, drums, alto saxophone, and guitar. The rhythmic underpinning of this work is inspired by the folk music of Colombia and the harmonic content will be derived from the jazz idiom. The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate the possible product of the fusion of musical disciplines that are on the surface in no way related. This thesis will also attempt to show an example of how cultures can meld socio-artistically.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In writing these pieces, the author attempted to reconcile two distinct musical styles, Colombian Folkloric music of the Andean region and modern jazz. Immediately, the necessity arises to state that these diverse musical cultures are both already cultural amalgams created by the migration and acculturation of people.

The African Diaspora is present in both disciplines. Early attempts by Colombian music historians to negate the influence of slave music on their treasured musical patrimony have been debunked by previous authors.¹ The influence of this same African culture in the conception of jazz music is already well documented.

The two musical styles in question also share European descent, which is most of all noticeable in the harmonic language of each. Distinctions between the inherently tertian and cyclical nature of Colombian music, and the harmonic extensions found in jazz can be traced anthropologically to the differences in the music of the Spanish court from the Baroque and early Classical period whose harmonic influence can be felt in Colombian music, and the music of the French Impressionists which was influential in the Creole culture of New Orleans in the latter half of the nineteenth century.²

The main factor that denotes the differences in these styles is the influence of indigenous rhythms belonging to the pre-Columbian cultures that existed in this region of

¹ John Varney, "Colombian Bambuco: The evolution of a national music style" (Ph.D. thesis, Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, 1999) 290.

² Frank Tirro, *Jazz: A history*

the Andes. No such influence exists in jazz. I chose to use these airs as the motor force for these movements since their appearance in jazz has been sparse. Colombian saxophonist Antonio Arnedo, has done what I believe to be the most mainstream recording of this combination.

The name of each movement comes from the specific air that was used for its rhythmic base. The titles are *Bambuco*, *Pasillo*, *Vals*, *Currulao*, *Pasillo Fiestero* and *Danza*. All of these are well known rhythms in Colombian culture. They have had some degree of dissemination in the broader musical sphere but are not as widely known as other Latin American music.

All, except for the *Danza*, are triple meters, generally notated in 3/4 time. (6/8 was also used in this suite to facilitate the reading of these ambiguous and syncopated rhythms). The *Danza*, a duple meter, shares impetus with the *Habanera*, well known in classical repertoire. Although the majority of the meters are triple in nature, the composer attempted to make each distinct and easily discernible.

Each of these rhythms, in their natural folk state, consists of a repetitive pattern of bass notes and chord punctuation. These patterns are unique to each air. There is a myriad of songs composed in each of these airs. An experienced Colombian musician, having never heard a song in question, only needs to be told which air the song employs and in which key it will be played. The musician will then harmonize the melody he hears using the chords available in that key, while employing the rhythmic signature of the given air. The harmony used in most early Colombian composition is mainly tonal and follows strictly the general rules of cyclical harmony and voice leading. This allows the musician to play a great number of songs though he may only know a few chords.

This characteristic shows a similarity to early Blues where an enormous amount of music has been written using the same harmonic progression. In fact, the Blues and Colombian music share a rural influence and provenance. They each have a harmonic simplicity they share and are representative of the cultures from which they come. The personalities of each culture are represented in the music.

In preparing these pieces, the author paid a great deal of attention to their melodic detail. As will be discussed in each subsequent chapter, the melodies contain fragments typical of Colombian music. The melody for *Danza* bears the least resemblance to its counterparts. Being the only inherently duple meter air in the suite, it was chosen by the composer to be the most abstract of the six themes. It is set apart from the others in its melodic contour and in its rhythmic usage. The rest contain rhythmic signatures from the music of Colombia. The author attempted to do this in a way that was not gratuitous and that did not compromise the integrity of the melodies. As Varney charts, there are rhythmic fragments and resolutions that are pervasive in traditional Colombian composition³. The author tried to use these fragments sparsely but at key moments during which the Colombian listener would expect them to be there. The author has done extensive performing of and listening to Colombian music. His background is Colombian. He was born in New York, but spent his later teens in the Valle state of southwestern Colombia between the Eastern and Central Ridges of the Andes Mountains. Here he began his study of Colombian folk music. This part of Colombia's music is all born of the Andes. Colombia has many different musical traditions that vary from region to region. The music of the Atlantic Coast region of Colombia, which includes Cartagena

³ Varney (145-150)

and Barranquilla, is not represented here. These regions are the birthplace of the Cumbia and Vallenato sounds which are not included in this work. Neither is the music of the eastern plains which bears similarities to the national music of Venezuela.

The *Bambuco* and the *Currulao* serving as bookends to the work are directly of African descent. They are both from the Pacific coast of Colombia and are notated in 6/8 in this work. Some debate exists about the original way to notate these airs,⁴ but for the purposes of this suite, 6/8 was chosen by the composer as the rhythmic vehicle to convey these movements to the musicians. The pasillo also exists in Ecuador as does the Currulao. The danza air is akin to the Cuban Danzon.

This work is meant to please both the listeners of jazz and the connoisseurs of Colombian music. Both should feel interested in and welcomed by this music. A person who has an ear for the airs of Colombia should immediately discern these airs in this suite. To facilitate that, the guitar becomes the bridging instrument between these distinct genres. It serves to evoke the rhythms in a more familiar fashion for the Colombian listener. Although the fingerstyle guitar is almost exclusively played in this music, the use of a plectrum recalls the work of the bandola player in Colombian music. The typical instrumental ensemble in Colombian folklore consists of a classical guitar playing the bass lines and punctuating the harmony, a tiple, which is a twelve stringed instrument in charge of rhythmic impulse via repetitive syncopated alternating strums, and a bandola. The bandola has sixteen strings, is played with a plectrum, and is in charge of the melodies. It is a cousin of the mandolin from Italy, and the bandurria and laud from Spain's string family. In the author's conception, the alto saxophone and the electric

⁴ Varney (80)

guitar (when playing single lines) replace the bandola, the tiple's role is shared by the cymbals and the guitar (when playing chords) and the piano and string bass play the classical guitar's harmonic and rhythmic foundational role. Highlights of this style include the work of "*El Trio Morales Pino*", which is a seminal ensemble of Colombia's music.

Typical vocal writing in Colombian music is scored for two voices, one of slightly higher register than the other singing in harmony. Generally, alternations of 3rds and 6ths are used. However, as counterpoint dictates, occasional use of other intervals is needed to conserve the integrity of both lines. Throughout the work the guitar and alto sax will alternate the lead voice role. This maintains the tradition of the duet from Colombian folklore and makes use of the interesting blend between these instruments.

An aspect that may cause difficulty is the phrasing of jazz lines in triple meter. Harmonic goals are reached a beat sooner than in common time, so the improviser must be able to adjust his phrasing to satisfy the resolutions. The *Vals* is treated as a jazz waltz, which may prove more familiar to a jazz player, but the other airs are less common, particularly the *Pasillo*.

Chapter 2

BAMBUCO

This is the air that Colombians of the central region most identify with. It has roots in the Cauca region but quickly made its way around the whole Central Cordillera (Ridge) of Colombia. Along with the currulao, it is considered an Afro-Indian product that made its way into mainstream culture in the mid 1850s. It is a notated music, and its performance required virtuosity, so it acquired the status of art music. On the other hand, it also maintains folk traditions of being played by ear on instruments of local design and construction. This dichotomy is a subject of study of many ethnomusicologists.

In this suite, *Bambuco* is a 56-bar composition in three sections that starts out with a walking bass line delineating the initial tonality of C minor. Its impulse connotes the cadence of the bambuco utilizing alternation between 6/8 and 3/4. The drums and piano enter simultaneously with the bass setting up an introduction using Cminor7 and Abmajor7 for two bars each. The author had several choices for notating this song, but 6/8 proved to be the clearest. The guitar enters on the second pass of this introductory section. (Instrumental introductory sections are ubiquitous in Colombian music. Each song has an instrumental introduction that was written specifically for it.) The author chose to put the melodic interest of this introduction in the string bass voice to state a jazz presence. This is not to say that original Colombian music is devoid of string bass. The original composers of this music were classically trained and wrote for various string ensembles. But in the folk tradition, which the author tried to maintain and expand upon,

string bass use is sparse. The ideal tempo for this song is dotted quarter equals 100. This provides it with a solid rhythmic direction but keeps it from straying into the Pasillo Fiestero tempo that follows in the fifth movement.

The A section begins with a melody beginning on the Eb which is the third of the Cminor7 chord. The melody is harmonized from below by the guitar using successive thirds and fourths, resolving in 6ths. The quarter note, eighth note alternation of the melody is in keeping with Varney's list of rhythmic fragments, but also connotes the swung eighth notes of Jazz⁵. It was the composer's intention for this ambiguity of rhythms to be noticeable. The melody alone could work with a walking bass line and drumming in 4/4, medium swing time. In this treatment it drives the 6/8 pattern set up by the bass and drums. In terms of its notes, the melody is in stepwise motion with note repetition. It contains an alternating succession of thirds and ninths on strong beats 1 and 4 (in this "Bambuco" the first and fourth eighth note of each measure gets accented) over the Cminor7 chord. At the third bar, which marks a chord change to Abmajor7, the melody accentuates the third of the chord in bar 3 and the major seventh in bar 4. (Considered by jazz theorists to be "guide tones", tones that most strongly delineate a certain harmony)

Bars 1 and 2 of the A section are duplicated in bars 5 and 6. At bar 7 and 8 a dominant F9 chord is introduced again as an allusion to jazz. (The dominant IV function is rare in Colombian music.) Bar 9 begins a stepwise descent in the bass line aiming for a half cadence (V7) at bar 12. The melody takes a very typically Colombian turn in these final four bars of the A section. This makes the A section of *Bambuco*, two 12-bar

⁵ Varney *ibid.*

sections which in essence makes it a blues-influenced form. (The 12-bar blues is a common form played in jazz, consisting of a statement, its repetition with mild harmonic variation, and a counterstatement each of which lasts four bars) The section repeats with the second ending resolving to Cminor7 on the downbeat of the second bar 12 of A. (See Example 2.1)

Example 2.1: Melodic excerpt from *Bambuco* (mm. 5-8)

The B section actually begins in bar 12 of the previous section. On beat 2 of this bar, the Bminor7 chord serves as a chromatic lead in from Cminor7 to the Bbminor7 chord that opens the B section. This is typical of jazz progressions that employ “sidestepping” which is the harmonic deviation by a half step of a progression. This provides some possibilities for sequential development of line when improvising over this part of the song. The tonality now moves to Ab major, using ii7, V7, I major7 and IV major 7 chords in progression. This cyclical chord movement is typical of Colombian music and Jazz music and marks the first four bars of the B section. The melody begins on the Db, which again is the third of the chord. The next bar has some Jazz interest, employing the natural thirteenth followed by the flat 9th. This Dominant 7, flat 9, natural thirteen chord is atypical of Colombian harmony, but very common in Jazz. This gives way to the first of several stepwise chord movements that appear in the suite. This one ascends from Fminor7 diatonically to the seventh bar which contains a G major triad over an A bass note. This distinctly mixolydian sound has D major for a parent scale, which is

set at the distance of a tritone from the original key of Ab in which the B section begins. The use of slash chords, the tonicization of mixolydian, and modulation by a diminished fifth are all jazz gestures that mark the B section as the beginning of a departure from traditional Colombian music and a gradual shift into the Jazz idiom. The second time through the section the eighth bar again sidesteps to the Ab/Bb chord which leads in to the C section. The B section is thus, a sixteen bar section divided in two eight bar phrases. (See Example 2.2)

Example 2.2: Melodic excerpt from *Bambuco*, B section (mm. 19-26)

The C section is launched by the previous bar. The Ab/Bb chord, which has Eb major as its parent scale, resolves to C major. This makes for root movement of an ascending second while the actual key is shifting downward by a minor third. This temporary arrival to C major is brief but effective. It is common of Colombian songs to modulate to the parallel major. It also marks a clear entrance into the C section. The first eight bars of the C section are written in four distinct modes, C Ionian, Eb Lydian, E Aeolian and A Dorian. The last two share a common parent scale of G major. (See Example 2.3)

Example 2.3: Melodic excerpt from *Bambuco* (mm.35-42)

The melodic usage is simplified in this section to allow for more rhythmic embellishment in the rhythm section. The final eight bars of the song are a harmonic sequence of the same progression and melody, first in A minor resolving to F# minor (again a parallel relationship) and second in C minor during the last four bars of the song which draws the idea full circle since the song then begins again in this same key.

Chapter 3

PASILLO

This air is the Colombian version of the 3/4 Viennese waltz tradition. It is however inverted rhythmically. The traditional waltz has one bass note lasting a dotted half note, punctuated by two chord strokes of a quarter note each. The pasillo juxtaposes this pattern placing two bass notes on beats one and two followed by a single chord punctuation on beat three. As was stated in the introduction, the pasillo is shared by Colombia and Ecuador. In Ecuador however, the harmony is slightly different. It has a more pentatonic sound and is more likely to hover around minor keys. The Colombian pasillo is more diatonic and appears in major keys equally as often.

Pasillo as it appears in this suite is a 46-bar form, divided into an eight bar introduction, a 16-bar statement made twice, with a 6-bar coda. It maintains a typically Colombian harmonic rhythm, but the band implies a modern urban funk sound in $\frac{3}{4}$ time. The original air is still discernible, implied more by the form of the song and by the melodic choices made than by the rhythm section. The introduction or prelude is in C# minor. The key movement of the main body of the song is organized in Coltrane's *Giant Steps* cycle, appearing here in the Db, F, A key succession. (The original uses the B, G, Eb system) This system of keys denotes an augmented triad when its roots are stacked harmonically.

An A major⁷ with the sharp eleventh in the melody is the first sound heard. This begins an eight bar section which serves as the “instrumental” introduction to the song.

The root movement in the first eight bars is typically Ecuadorian. The beginning of phrases on the VI chord of the minor key is most common in the pasillo of Ecuador. The VI, III, V7, I minor is seen in various Ecuadorian pasillos. The melody is typically Andean except for bar 5, which has a sharp ninth. This has very little usage in Colombian pasillo, but occasionally one hears a guitarist play a C major triad, against an E7 chord in Ecuadorian pasillo thus unwittingly implying an altered sonority. Pentatonic melodic writing is also present for the first time in the suite. (See Example 3.1)

The image displays two staves of musical notation for the first eight bars of the piece 'Pasillo'. The top staff is labeled 'Guitar' and the bottom staff is unlabeled, likely representing a piano accompaniment. Both staves are in 3/4 time and use a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notation includes various chords and melodic lines. Above the guitar staff, the following chords are labeled: Amaj7#11, Emaj7, G#alt, and C#-7. Above the piano staff, the same sequence of chords is labeled: Amaj7#11, Emaj7, G#alt, and C#-7. The guitar part features a melodic line with a tritone leap in bar 9, while the piano part provides harmonic support with the specified chords.

Example 3.1: First eight bars of *Pasillo*

The body of the song begins in bar 9. The melody begins with a tritone leap from the flat ninth to the fifth to imply a dominant chord during the stop time leading into the Ebmin9, which is topped by a ninth. This is followed by a Gb minor(maj7) resolving to a Db/F chord thus completing the first clear statement in Db major. This arrival only lasts a bar. The subsequent E13 chord marks a key shift of a major third in descent, starting the Coltrane cycle with a modulation to A major. A ii-V progression ensues in bars 5 and 6 followed by a distinctly Jazz influenced moment in bar 7 where there is an accented major ninth put on top of a C# half diminished chord thus invoking a Locrian #2 mode, which is from the E melodic minor parent scale system, another common jazz usage that is not at all associated with Colombian music. This is followed by an F#7 chord which

makes for the second un-resolved ii-V progression within four bars. The melody in this song does not contain many large leaps and is basically contained within an octave, some of which are traits common to Colombian pasillo melodies. The beginning of the theme takes place on the up-beat of the first beat of the measure. This is most common in pasillos and vales (waltzes) of the Colombian and Ecuadorian folk tradition. Also there are repeating notes in the melody typical of songs with lyrics. Throughout this work, the author had certain textual ideas regarding the would-be subject matter that these songs would set well to. This song reflects that most of all. It could be easily adapted into a vocal melody. (See Example 3.2)

8 E^b_9 $G^b\text{-maj}7$ D^b/F

12 E^{13} B^-9 E^{aug} $C^\#\text{-}7b5$

16 $F^\#\text{alt}$ G^-7 $C9$ A^-7

20 D^{alt} $A^{\text{maj}7}$ $G^\#\text{sus}$ $C^\#\text{m}7$ *To Coda I*

Example 3.2: Melodic excerpt from *Pasillo* (mm. 8-23)

Bar 9 starts a new series of unresolved ii-V progressions in the final key of F major completing the Coltrane cycle of keys. This is the climax point of the melody. From here the song returns to C#, (Db) for a pentatonic ending. The second time through there is a

6 bar tag added that contains the second of the suite's progressions with root movement consisting of seconds. (See Example 3.3)

24

A^b7b9/D^b F[#]-7 G[#]-7 A maj7

28

G^b/A^b D^b maj7

Example 3.3: Ending of *Pasillo*

Chapter 4

DANZA

The danza rhythm is the only rhythm in the suite that is duple. It is a descendant of the Cuban Habanera and certain dances of Spain, which also spawned the Cuban danzon, and possibly the Latin bolero. Its strains can be heard throughout Colombia, but most especially in the Valle region, where there are hundreds of obscure danzas that are all from an area of about 30 square miles, another characteristic of folk music; its regionalism, how slight geographical differences can mark distinct changes in style and esthetic.

This 25 bar song, with an eight bar intro, is the most modern composition in the suite. Using the least syncopated air in the work, *Danza* has an initial melodic statement, which is made up of all twelve notes available. (The *Currulao* will also have a twelve-tone line, but not harmonized) Via a series of triads superimposed over an A pedal point, the author managed to harmonically support each gesture of the line, in so easing the possible atonal tension that a dodecaphonic melody would be expected to create. This melody is not technically a tone row, because the F is repeated. The line has several triplet figures, which serve to soften the angles of the melody. The melody is also designed in a fashion that allows it to be not rhythmically strict. The alto saxophonist and guitarist who carry the theme in unison, simply need to follow each other in order to maintain a coordinated rubato ensemble sound. The twelve tone statement is repeated with bars 7 and 8 containing the first deviations from the pedal point found in the opening bars, a C#minor9 chord and a Bb6 chord, respectively. (See Example 4.1)

Example 4.1: Opening melodic statement of *Danza* (mm. 5-12)

The second leg of the song starts with the most rhythmically active melodic statement yet heard in this movement, a sixteenth note flourish on A phrygian, which when set against a harmonic backdrop of Bb6 creates a distinct Bb lydian sound. The final D concert note of the sixteenth note run is the first note of the 9th bar, which is the beginning of the second section. This note is harmonized by a Bminor7 chord, which changes the character of the piece and initiates a slight turn forward in rhythmic intensity, promoted by the sixteenth note passage. The third line of the piece has two triplet statements on B minor and then C minor. This half step shift builds via dynamics to a series of slash chords (triads superimposed over non-harmonic bass notes) that mark the songs first moment of arrival. This is the loudest part of the piece thus far. The scales implied by these chords are: D melodic minor, F# Phrygian, G auxiliary diminished, and finally Bb major which is the release of this climactic gesture. (See Example 4.2)

Example 4.2: Melodic excerpt from *Danza* (mm. 17-20)

These four bars should not only be pivotal in the dynamic curve of the piece, but the should themselves be imbued with an arc building to bar 15 with the G13b9 chord and sinking back to a placid mezzo piano on the Bbmajor7 chord. Then the final leg of the song begins in bar 17 with yet another stepwise progression from, Dminor7 to Ebmajor7(#11) and then F major finally ending with a descent to a Db half diminished chord which serves as a plateau to set up the final phrase. (See Example 4.3)

Example 4.3: Excerpt from *Danza* (mm. 21-24)

Three consecutive major chords, Cmajor7, Bbmajor7 and Ebmajor7 frame the final ascent to a B phrygian chord. The line rises in pitch gradually to an E concert at the beginning of bar 24. Here the author placed one of the many blues figures that are scattered around the suite, which the band accentuates together at a high intensity. Then the bass returns with its written ostinato outlining the original chords that introduced the movement. (See Example 4.3)

Example 4.3: Melodic excerpt from *Danza* (mm.25-33)

In terms of improvisation, this is the most exacting progression to negotiate that can be found in this work. Every bar line requires a harmonic alteration of scale (Bars 11 and 12 could perhaps both be played over in C aeolian). It is the most challenging vehicle for a soloist in this suite. The other pieces have some phrasing issues that are exacerbated by the triple meters, but this one has many harmonic details that have to be taken into account to successfully improvise over its tonal changes.

Chapter 5

VALS

As mentioned in the second chapter, the Viennese waltz influenced the writing of Colombian composers. It was undoubtedly brought to Colombia in the European migration. It is the only air in the work that is unaltered rhythmically by New World musicians. It maintained its cadence in Colombia, and made its way to Peru and Argentina where beats 2 and 3 are treated in a more staccato fashion.

There is a strong waltz tradition in jazz as well, so the author chose to give this piece a clear jazz waltz feel. This also helps differentiate it from the other triple meters in this work. It is the most light-hearted movement in the work, marking a departure from the subdued intensity of the *Danza*. It is not without harmonic interest and detail but in spirit, it is supposed to be somewhat jovial. Hitherto, the pieces have had enough tonal shifting to make any reference to them being in a certain key inaccurate, but the *Vals* is strongly centered in D minor. (The *Bambuco* only spends 16 bars in Cminor out of 56) The eighth notes should be played *inegale* or swung, promoting a triplet feel, and the dynamic remains mezzo forte to forte. It consists of a 32-bar section, split into two 16 bar sections. It ends with a 16 bar section, eight of which are spent in D major and the other half in Fmajor/Dminor.

Many Colombian waltz and pasillo melodies start on the upbeat of beat one. This tradition was continued in the *Vals* and the *Pasillo*. The melody starts with a phrase again taken from pentatonic, on Dminor7. The Ab melody note on the downbeat of bar 2 comes from the D blues scale but I harmonized it in Db major again in keeping with the

sidestepping tradition of jazz composers. The minor third descent to Bbmaj7 reinstates D minor as the harmonic canvas for the piece. The first statement ends with a stepwise chordal ascent from Fmaj7 to Gminor7 to G# fully diminished, resolving in A7(b13) all of which are harmonically in line with the D minor tonality of this movement. The first four bars repeat in bars 9 through 12. Bar 13 marks the first and only lengthy departure from the tonality of D via a 4 bar ii-V progression in the key of A major. The A melody note that served as the third of F major in bar 5, is taken up an octave in bar 13 and serves as the seventh of the Bminor7 chord serving as ii-7 in this portion of the tune. (See Example 5.1)

itar

G m7 Dbmaj7 Bbmaj7 A7(b13)

Fmaj7 Gm7 G#dim A7(b13)

5

9 G m7 Dbmaj7 Bbmaj7 A7(b13)

13 B min7 E9

Example 5.1: Opening melodic statement of *Vals* (mm. 1-16)

Bar 17 begins a stepwise progression that lasts through 16 bars. B half diminished, Bbmaj7, Asus7, Abmaj7 (#11), Gminor7 and Fmaj7 all come in succession while the melody repeats the same figure twice with some alteration to satisfy

the harmony. Ending this section is a Two-Five progression in D major. The author wrote a C natural in the melody over a Dminor11 chord in bar 30 for its character. It implies E locrian and not the usual dorian. (See Example 5.2)

Example 5.2 shows a melodic excerpt from *Vals* (mm. 17-32). The notation is in treble clef. The chords and measures are as follows:

- Staff 1 (mm. 17-20): Bmin7(b5) (mm. 17-18), Bbmaj7 (mm. 19-20).
- Staff 2 (mm. 21-24): Asus7 (mm. 21-22), Abmaj7(#11) (mm. 23-24).
- Staff 3 (mm. 25-28): Gmin7 (mm. 25-26), F6 (mm. 27-28).
- Staff 4 (mm. 29-32): Emin11 (mm. 29-30), A7 (mm. 31-32). The excerpt ends with a repeat sign and the text "(1st time only)".

Example 5.2: Melodic excerpt from *Vals* (mm. 17-32)

Bar 33 marks a departure to the key of D major instigating a distinct character change in the piece. The harmony is diatonic and descends from Gmajor7 to C major7. The melody is an embellished descending D major scale. It is the simplest moment of the suite in harmony and melodic interest.

The final eight bars behave sequentially with the eight previous bars, maintaining melodic contour and a major sonority, but they are in the relative minor of the original key. The piece then recapitulates for the improvisations.

In character this piece and the following *Pasillo Fiestero* bear the most resemblance to their original counterparts. They have a more similar harmonic make up

and melodically are traditional in rhythm and note barring a few minor deviations. (See Example 5.3)

33 Gmaj7 F#min7 Emin7 Dmaj7

37 Gmaj7 Dmaj7 Cmaj7

41 Bbmaj7 Fmaj7 Gmin7 Amin7

45 Bbmaj7 Amin7 Dmaj7

48

Example 5.3: Final sixteen measures of *Vals* (mm. 33-48)

Chapter 6

PASILLO FIESTERO

The virtuosic tradition in Colombia has a strong place. Society has perennially valued instrumental dexterity, extolling it in mainstream recordings. There are various national contests of traditional instrumental music such as the Mono Nunez festival in the city of Ginebra in the state of Valle.

In keeping with this tradition, the author composed this *Pasillo Fiestero*. It is differentiated from its namesake *Pasillo* by the descriptive *Fiestero*, which loosely means of a party or festive. This additional descriptive term, when added to a traditional air, simply means the tempo is raised, sometimes dramatically. The optimum tempo for *Pasillo* is ca. 96 bpm. The *Pasillo Fiestero* quite the contrary clocks in at about 262 bpm. This is the typical tempo for this air.

Pasillos of the fast variety are generally interpreted by the bandola. As previously stated, this is a cousin to the mandolin. Virtuosity on this instrument is and has always been highly regarded in Colombia. The “*Trio Morales Pino*” is the standard bearer for this modality of performance. The author’s grandfather, Jose Manuel Bermudez was a well-known performer of this traditional music. This suite is in tribute to him and to the author’s father. Most especially this movement is meant to sound authentically Colombian, the only difference being the instrumentation.

Strongly rooted in F minor, this song starts with a 6-note pickup that sets up the tempo. The first four bars outline the chords clearly using F harmonic minor, which is a

typical scale in Colombian composition. The Dbmajor7 chord in bar two is uncommon in Colombia only because of the Major seventh. The bVI function is however widely used.

The fifth bar on a C altered chord, employs the seventh mode of Melodic Minor, also known as the altered scale. This provides for the availability of a minor third on a dominant chord. (The proper name for that interval is the sharp ninth.) This is most unusual in Colombian harmony but it makes for a surreptitious inclusion of the Jazz harmony framing this suite. The third phrase of the A section also includes the altered sound, this time on F altered which acts like a secondary dominant resolving deceptively to Dbmajor7 again. Then a stop time occurs on Gbmajor (Neapolitan). To close the first section, a *back door* ii-V progression consisting of Bbmajor7 and Eb7 was chosen. This then resolves up a whole step to the F major. (See Example 6.1)

Example 6.1: Opening melodic statement of *Pasillo Fiestero* (mm. 1-17)

The B section includes the final stepwise progression and a more jazz oriented melodic approach. This section adopts a slight swing, but it is masked by the fast tempo that evens out the eight notes. (See Example 6.2)

18 B $\flat$ min7 Cmin11

22 D $\flat$ maj7 Dmin7(b5)

Example 6.2: Excerpt from *Pasillo Fiestero* (mm. 18-25)

The progression ascends from Bbminor7 to D half-diminished via Cminor7 and Dbmajor7. The improvisation should take place only on this section.

The last section is built melodically on a repetitive pattern very typical of those found in Colombian fast pasillos. The first sonority on this section is however not found readily in traditional Colombian music. The iv half diminished function occurs in true harmonic minor harmony if the raised eleventh is brought down an octave. It is basically a iv-i-V7-i progression. The final chromatic passage is meant as a hemiola felt in 3/2 time. (See Example 6.3)

43 B $\flat$ min7(b5) Fmin7

47 Calt Fmin7

Example 6.3: Ending statement of *Pasillo Fiestero* (mm. 43-50)

Chapter 7

CURRULAO

The currulao is an Afro-Latin rhythm found mainly in Colombia and Ecuador. It can be notated either in 12/8 or as it appears in the suite, in 6/8. This air was originally interpreted by percussion ensembles. According to Varney, these ensembles generally consist of a guasa (shaker), cununo drums, a bass drum and a marimba for melodic interest⁶. The guitar introduction of the *Currulao* in this suite imitates the *marimba Chocoana*, a xylophone type instrument made of wood which is from the Choco state of western Colombia, a predominantly Afro-Colombian area. The instruments each add a part to the rhythm adding quadruplet gestures to the triple meter to provide rhythmic counterpoint and African elements of syncopation and polyrhythm. The intonation of The traditional “caderona” (woman of big hips) call and response chant can be chosen in performance if an adequate singer is available. The band can respond in chorus. This call and response tradition in African music has left lasting effects that are readily noticeable in rural blues, gospel and spiritual songs, jazz, and virtually every popular genre. In this piece it shows traditional influence and evokes the original nature of this air. If lacking a singer the band can enter directly into the written portion of the song.

The saxophone plays the melody alone for the first time in the suite. This melody begins in the high register of the alto sax creating intensity via the urgent sound of this tessitura. There is a tradition of clarinet playing in the southwestern region of Colombia where the currulao originates, most likely due to European influence. The saxophone

⁶ Varney (40)

emulates the clarinet, but provides an added degree of stridence and intensity. This melody is in fact a Tone Row utilizing all twelve tones without repetition through the Db note that is the flatted 5th of G blues, the source of this sections ending phrase. (See Example 7.1)

Example 7.1: Melodic excerpt from *Currulao* (mm. 1-12)

The first three notes Gb, F, and Ab neighbor the G pedal point implied by the bass and guitar. In the ensuing line three chromatic tones precede a D, stated twice consecutively. With the phrase ending on a D note, the G tonality is strengthened. The ensuing phrase when played against a G pedal implies a blues sound with both natural and flat 13ths followed by the final phrase that solidifies G as the tonality, via the flatted 5th, natural 5th, flatted 7th, the fifth, fourth and minor third successively.

At this point the rhythm and intensity of the ensemble should be at a peak for the entrance of the B section. This B section is built on G minor. It is repetitive and recalls in its syncopation the sound of the music of Colombia, in this case the Pacific coast, while via this instrumentation maintaining a clear modern jazz esthetic, which again is the concept for this whole work.

Musically speaking, the melody begins with a minor third interval from G to Bb using repetition of the G to anchor the harmony. The notes come from the G minor pentachord of G, A, Bb, C, and D. (See Example 7.2)

Example 7.2: Excerpt from *Currulao* (mm. 18-34)

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I. BAMBUCO

Alvaro Bermudez

C min7 A^b maj7

A 5 C min7 A^b maj7

9 C min7 F 9

13 F min9 C min/E^b D 7 b9 G 7 b9 D 7 b9 G 7 b9 C min B min

B 19 B^b min7 E^b 7 b9 A^b maj7 D^b maj7

23 F min7 G min7 G/A

2 I. BAMBUCO

C

27 B $\flat$ min7 E $\flat$ 7b9 A $\flat$ maj7 D $\flat$ maj7

31 Fmin11 Gmin7 G/A A $\flat$ /B $\flat$

35 Cmaj7 E $\flat$ maj7

39 Emin7 Amin7

43 Dmin7 Emin7 F $\sharp$ min7

47 Fmin7 Gmin7 D7b9 G7b9 Cmin7

I. BAMBUCO

Alvaro Bermudez

Amin7 Fmaj7

A 5 Amin7 Fmaj7

9 Amin7 D9

13 Dmin9 Amin/C B7b9 E7b9 B7b9 E7b9 AminAbmin

B 19 Gmin7 C7b9 Fmaj7 Bbmaj7

23 Dmin7 Emin7 E/F#

2

I. BAMBUCCO

C

27 $G^{min}7$ $C7b9$ $F^{maj}7$ $B^b^{maj}7$

31 $D^{min}11$ $E^{min}7$ $E/F\#$ F/G

35 $A^{maj}7$ $C^{maj}7$

39 $C\#^{min}7$ $F\#^{min}7$

43 $B^{min}7$ $C\#^{min}7$ $E^b^{min}7$

47 $D^{min}7$ $E7b13$ $B7b9$ $E7b9$ $A^{min}7$

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef. It consists of six staves, each containing a sequence of notes and rests. Above the staves, chord symbols are provided for each measure. The first staff (measures 27-30) features chords $G^{min}7$, $C7b9$, $F^{maj}7$, and $B^b^{maj}7$. The second staff (measures 31-34) features $D^{min}11$, $E^{min}7$, $E/F\#$, and F/G . The third staff (measures 35-38) features $A^{maj}7$ and $C^{maj}7$. The fourth staff (measures 39-42) features $C\#^{min}7$ and $F\#^{min}7$. The fifth staff (measures 43-46) features $B^{min}7$, $C\#^{min}7$, and $E^b^{min}7$. The sixth staff (measures 47-50) features $D^{min}7$, $E7b13$, $B7b9$, $E7b9$, and $A^{min}7$. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 50.

II. PASILLO

ALVARO BERMUDEZ

Amaj7#11 Emaj7 G#alt C#-7

Amaj7#11 Emaj7 G#alt C#-7

8 Eb-9 Gb-maj7 Db/F

12 E13 B-9 Eaug C#-7b5

16 F#alt G-7 C9 A-7

20 Dalt Amaj7 G#sus C#m7

To Coda

2 A^b7b9/D^b

PASILLO

F[#]-7

G[#]-7

Amaj7

G^b/A^b

D^bmaj7

II. PASILLO

ALVARO BERMUDEZ

F#maj7#11 C#maj7 Falt Bb-7

F#maj7#11 C#maj7 Falt Bb-7

C-9 Eb-maj7 Bb/D

C#13 G#-9 C#alt Bb-7b5

Ebalt E-7 A9 F#-7

Balt F#maj7 Fsus Bbmin7

To Coda

2 F7b9/B^b

PASILLO

F-7

G^bmaj7

24.

Eb-7

 E^b/F

B^bmaj7

28

III. DANZA

Alvaro Bermudez

Amaj7 Am(b6) B/A Gm/A

bass

5 Amaj7 Am(b6) B/A Gm/A

3 (bass line continues) 3

9 Amaj7 Am(b6) C#m9 Bb6

3 3

13 Bm7 Bbalt Cm9 Ab6

3 3

17 A/F Em/F# G 13(b9) Bbmaj7

Dm9 Ebmaj7(#11) Fmaj7 Dbm7b5

21

25 Cmaj7 Bbmaj7 Ebmaj7 Am/B

3/4

2

III. Danza

Amaj7

Am(b6)

B/A

Gm/A

29
D.S. al Fine

D.S. al Fine

III. DANZA

Alvaro Bermudez

F#maj7 F#m(b6) G#/F# Em/F#
 bass

F#maj7 F#m(b6) G#/F# Em/F#
 5 (bass line continues)

F#maj7 F#m(b6) Bbm9 G6
 9

G#m Galt Am9 F6
 13

F#/D Dbm/Eb E13(b9) Gmaj7
 17

Bm9 Cmaj7(#11) Dmaj7 Bbm7(b5)
 21

Amaj7 Gmaj7 Cmaj7 F#m/G#
 25

8 3/4

F#maj7

F#m(b6)

G#/F#

Em/F#

29

D.S. al Fine

IV. VALS

Alvaro Bermudez

The musical score for "IV. VALS" by Alvaro Bermudez is written in 3/4 time and consists of six staves of music. The chords and measures are as follows:

- Staff 1: Gm7, D♭maj7, B♭maj7, A7(b13)
- Staff 2: Fmaj7, Gm7, G♯dim, A7(b13)
- Staff 3: Gm7, D♭maj7, B♭maj7, A7(b13)
- Staff 4: Bmin7, E9
- Staff 5: Bmin7(b5), B♭maj7
- Staff 6: Asus7, A♭maj7(#11)

The score includes measure numbers 5, 9, 13, 17, and 21. The notation includes treble clefs, key signatures with one flat (B♭), and various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

IV. VALS

Alvaro Bermudez

Em7 Bbmaj7 Gmaj7 F#7(b13)

5 Dmaj7 Em7 Fdim F#7(b13)

9 Em7 Bbmaj7 Gmaj7 F#7(b13)

13 Abmin7 Db9

17 Abmin7(b5) Gmaj7

21 F#sus7 Fmaj7(#11)

Emin7

D6

C#min7

F#7

Emaj7

D#min7

C#min7

Bmaj7

Emaj7

Bmaj7

Amaj7

Gmaj7

Dmaj7

Emin7

F#min7

Gmaj7

F#min7

Bmaj7

V. PASILLO FIESTERO

Alvaro Bermudez

F min7 D^b maj7 C7b9

5 Calt F min7

9 F min7 Falt D^b maj7 G^b maj7

13 B^b min7 E^b9 F maj6 1.

18 B^b min7 Cmin11

22 D^b maj7 Dmin7(b5)

V. PASILLO FIESTERO

Alvaro Bermudez

D min7 B^b maj7 A7b9

5 Aalt D min7

9 D min7 Dalt B^b maj7 E^b maj7

13 G min7 C9 D maj6

18 G min7 A min11

22 B^b maj7 B min7(b5)

VI. CURRULAO

Alvaro Bermudez

(Band builds G pedal to sax cue)

ff

5

9

13

1.

18

22

solo on G minor blues

VI. CURRULAO

Alvaro Bermudez

ff

5

9

13

1.

18

22

solo on E minor blues