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THE PERCUSSION MUSIC OF PUERTO RICAN COMPOSER WILLIAM ORTIZ

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degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

By

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THE PERCUSSION MUSIC OF PUERTO RICAN COMPOSER WILLIAM ORTIZ

A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR THE  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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## ABSTRACT

The percussion music of Latin American composers is still widely unavailable. The purpose of this document is to introduce the percussion music of Latin American composer William Ortiz to a larger number of performers, educators, and scholars of Latin American music. Puerto Rican composer William Ortiz was raised and educated in the United States, but his Latino identity plays a vital role in his music. Particularly, his experiences as a Nuyorican in the 1970s have informed the aesthetics of his music, which transforms the sounds of the streets into art music. Unique in that respect is the use of what Ortiz calls “vocalized graffiti,” verbal passages that are integrated in Ortiz’ instrumental narrative. This document begins by questioning the place of Latin American music and musicians in a complex socio-political context dominated by Eurocentric thought. After reviewing the literature on Ortiz, focus is given to the rich rhythmic vocabulary he explores in his compositions, the most notable Latin American trait of his musical language. Attention is brought to the importance of Afro-Latin American music and salsa in defining Ortiz’ Latin American aesthetics. In the second part of the document, other unique elements are examined in individual compositions. The document concludes with a list of Ortiz’ complete works and a transcription of the interview conducted with Ortiz.

*Aos meus pais com amor, carinho, admiração, e respeito*

Paulo de Oliveira Coelho de Souza

Maria Marta Araujo Coelho de Souza

# THE PERCUSSION MUSIC OF PUERTO RICAN COMPOSER WILLIAM ORTIZ

## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM, PURPOSE, AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

#### *Introduction*

The development of art music in Latin America has been affected by a complex blend of traditions. For about four hundred years, since the beginning of colonization until the end of the nineteenth century, the art music of the Americas followed European models for the most part strictly. This inheritance has been both a blessing and a curse in the shaping of an independent Latin American musical tradition. Many Latin American composers in the twentieth century consciously sought to develop a national school of music. Carlos Chávez, Alberto Ginastera, and Heitor Villa-Lobos were among the most prominent promoters of that school.<sup>1</sup> This movement, not just in music but in all of the arts, was triggered by the attempt of some populist governments to solidify the formation of their young nation-states.<sup>2</sup> Awareness of unique traditional music-cultures in Latin America was also of great significance, which resulted from the mixing of Spanish, Portuguese, Amerindian, and African people, among others. While nationalism was the first step in this process of cultural emancipation from Europe, many social factors have prevented the continuous development of Latin American music.<sup>3</sup> Several composers, for

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<sup>1</sup> Gilbert Chase, "Music in Latin America," in *Twentieth-Century Composers: American Music Since 1910*, by Virgil Thomson (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), 113.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Turino, "Nationalism and Latin American Music: Selected Case Studies and Theoretical Considerations," *Latin American Music Review* 24, no. 2 (2003): 169-70.

<sup>3</sup> Julio Estrada, "Raíces y Tradición en la Música Nueva de México y de América Latina," *Latin American Music Review* 3, no. 2 (1982): 203-205.

example, have commented on the importance of nurturing the music of Latin America in Latin America above all places. Many factors, however, challenge the educator and performer in Latin America. Brazilian composer Marlos Nobre summarizes some of these problems:

No se estudia la música latinoamericana en las escuelas de música porque no hay partituras ni discos suficientes para su obtención inmediata y posible; como consecuencia no se publica la música latinoamericana, porque no hay mercado...; como segunda consecuencia, los alumnos que serán maestros, directores de orquesta, pianistas, violinistas, etc., en el futuro, no conocerán la música latinoamericana y no la presentarán en sus posibles conciertos, cuando empiecen sus carreras de concertistas. O, los que no terminan esta carrera se volverán profesores, y como desconocen la música latinoamericana, no la transmitirán a sus alumnos; aprenden ellos y sus alumnos a considerar como “gran música” solamente aquella que fue la base de sus estudios, esto es, los maestros europeos de los siglos XVIII y XIX, porque aún para los maestros europeos del siglo XX hay dificultades de información y adquisición de obras.

[We do not study the music of Latin America in our music schools because there are not enough scores and recordings immediately available or in existence; as a consequence we do not publish Latin American music, because there is not a market for it...; as a second consequence, the students that will become our teachers, conductors, pianists, violinists, etc., in the future, do not get to know the music of Latin America and will not program it in their future performances, when they start their concert careers. Or, the ones who do not pursue this career will become teachers, and as they do not know the music of Latin America, they will not pass it on to their students; they and their students learn to consider as “great music” only that music that was the foundation of their studies, that is, the music of European composers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, because it is still difficult to acquire information and the works of 20<sup>th</sup> century European composers.]<sup>4</sup>

This vicious cycle is expanded further by the general difficulties that are common to almost all Latin American countries in the area of music education, which is mostly available to a very limited number of individuals at a few conservatories and private schools. All of these problems affect the musical production of composers directly by leading them to pursue the musical aesthetics of European composers and not that of

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<sup>4</sup> Marlos Nobre, “Música en América Latina: Problemas, Anhelos y Posibilidades,” *Heterofonía* 17, no. 4 (1984): 52-53.

Latin American composers. In 2000, Mexican composer Manuel de Elías founded, along with twenty composers from different Latin American countries, *El Colegio de Compositores Latinoamericanos de Música de Arte*,<sup>5</sup> which published a manifesto outlining the most persistent problems Latin American composers face. Besides the general difficulties in getting their works performed, recorded, published, and distributed, they mention the poor quality of performances due to the limited number of professional players specializing in new music, the indifferent response of very few qualified music critics along with the audience's justified lack of critical evaluation, the inadequate funding of the arts by most governments, the almost nonexistent contributions by philanthropic or commercial institutions, the deficient copyright system, the lack of commissioning programs, and the commercialization of orchestras and festivals favoring the programming of standard compositions from the European repertoire.<sup>6</sup>

Another problem mentioned by Cuban-American composer Aurelio de la Vega is the inferiority complex that not too long ago many Latin American composers experienced towards the music of Europe and of the United States. Some authors have attempted to reconstruct the history of Latin American music to raise awareness of its rather rich history. The many instances when a Latin American composer only receives recognition in his own country after he succeeds in Europe or the United States has become a phenomenon in itself. With the objective of demystifying this trend and presenting a more positive view of Latin America's music history, de la Vega has written:

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<sup>5</sup> *School of Latin American Art Music Composers.*

<sup>6</sup> Manuel de Elías, "Manifiesto de los Compositores Latinoamericanos," *Revista Musical Chilena* 55, no. 195 (2001): 87-93.

Up to the middle of the nineteenth century, the musical developments of Latin America far surpassed those of North America: early purely instrumental polyphonic music appearing in Mexico City during the late sixteenth century; lyric incidental music to plays in the Viceroyalty of Peru in the first two decades of the seventeenth century; modest symphonies “à la Haydn” composed in Santiago de Cuba by Juan de París in 1796 and 1798; the composition of the first two operas written in the New World (Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco’s *La Púrpura de la Rosa*, Lima, 1701, and Manuel de Zumaya’s *La Parténope*, Mexico City, 1711); the erection of the first opera houses of the continent in Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro and Bahia; and, most important of all, the development of a very strong folk music through the hybridization of Spanish, Indian, and Black musical elements. Even as late as the end of the nineteenth century, the music of South America, through the operas of the Brazilian Carlos Gomes (1836-1896) and the Cuban Gaspar Villate (1851-1912), was much better known in Europe than any music produced in North America.<sup>7</sup>

In fact, some composers believe this development of a strong folk music culture to be one of the possible foundations for the development of a distinct Latin American music.

Cuban author Alejo Carpentier notes that since the time of Georges Bizet’s *Carmen*, when the composer wrote a “Habanera,” or music from Havana, European composers have used Latin American musical resources with great success. Claude Debussy’s *La soirée dans Grenade*, Maurice Ravel’s *Rapsodie Espagnole*, and Erik Satie’s *Sites Auriculaires*, are good examples of such pieces. Darius Milhaud, on the other hand, relies on the rhythms of Brazilian traditional music to write two of his most celebrated compositions: *Saudades do Brasil* and *L’Homme et son désir*. Carpentier continues by saying that Edgar Varèse, “so justly admired in our time as a precursor of genius, studied the notation of some Latin American percussion instruments in the works of his dear friends, the Brazilian Heitor Villa-Lobos, and the Cubans [Alejandro García] Caturla and [Amadeo] Roldán, before writing pieces—such as *Ionization*—that have become classics

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<sup>7</sup> Aurelio de la Vega, “Latin American Composers in the United States,” *Latin American Music Review* 1, no. 2 (1980): 162-163.

in the world of new music."<sup>8</sup> Latin American percussion instruments in particular have become a common part of the modern orchestra such as that of Olivier Messiaen and Pierre Boulez.

Much has been done in the last twenty years to improve the situation of art music in Latin America. For example, several festivals have been created to promote Latin American music and to facilitate the exchange of ideas between nations in the areas of musical production, education, and performance. Perhaps one of the most important festivals today is the *Festival Latinoamericano de Música*, which since 1990 has taken place in Caracas, Venezuela. Many of Latin America's most prominent contemporary composers have participated in its performances, workshops, conferences, seminars, and lectures.<sup>9</sup> In the 1992 festival William Ortiz presented a lecture entitled "*Folklore de Ciudad: Manifestación Músico-Social en la Música de Concierto.*"<sup>10</sup>

The creation of scholarly Latin American music periodicals has also been important in the dissemination of information and in the discussion of current issues. Some of the most important of these are: *Revista Musical Chilena* (Chile), *Heterofonía* (Mexico), *Revista Musical de Venezuela* (Venezuela), *Tempo Brasileiro* (Brasil), and *Buenos Aires Musical* (Argentina).<sup>11</sup> In the United States, *Latin American Music Review*, published at the University of Texas at Austin, has been crucial to providing literature on Latin American music in English. Its editor, Gerard H. Béhague, is also the author of *Music in Latin America: An Introduction*, published in 1979, still the most complete

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<sup>8</sup> Alejo Carpentier, "El Ángel de las Maracas: Lo que la Música Moderna Debe a América Latina," *Casa de Las Américas* 43 (1973): 5-6.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix 1 for a complete list of participant composers.

<sup>10</sup> *Folklore of the City: Musical-Social Manifestation in Art Music.*

<sup>11</sup> Robert Stevenson, ed., "Latin American Music Periodicals," *Inter-American Music Review* 13, no. 2 (1993): 145-146.

overview to date of the history of art music in Latin America. Of great importance to the study of Latin American music is the University of Indiana Latin American Music Center founded by Chilean composer Juan-Orrego Salas. Its mission statement reads:

The Center fosters the research and performance of Latin American art music, and promotes the professional and academic exchange between musicians and scholars from the United States and Latin America. Activities include concerts, commissions, premiere performances and recordings, courses in Latin American music history, visits by distinguished performing artists and lecturers, festivals and seminars. The Latin American Music Center makes available to scholars, performers, and institutions the most complete library of Latin American art music in the world. It also sponsors a Latin American popular music ensemble, a performance competition, and student independent study programs.<sup>12</sup>

Broadly speaking, however, much remains to be done in the area of Latin American music studies. For one, the network of information lags behind in organization and dissemination and a rather small number of institutions in Latin America can provide scholars with adequate facilities and materials for research.

Other factors affecting the field include the inherent difficulty in defining a Latin American identity in a world with loose and mutating cultural barriers. Identity issues present a special challenge for the researcher as they inadvertently cross into social and political arenas. Virgil Thomson's famous statement, "The way to write American music is simple. All you have to do is be an American and then write any kind of music you wish. There is precedent and model here for all the kinds. And any Americanism worth bothering about is everybody's property anyway. Leave it to the unconscious; let nature speak," while a plausible solution to the problem of national identity has been considered problematic in the midst of totalitarian forms of government and their pre-determined

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<sup>12</sup> Latin American Music Center, "Research at Indiana University: Centers, Institutes, and Museums" (Accessed 7 July 2004) [database on-line], available from <http://www.research.indiana.edu/centers/lamc.html>.

musical aesthetics or in the midst of an extremely diverse Latin America where many composers hardly know about each other and, therefore, cannot relate to a common Latin American aesthetics.<sup>13</sup> Many composers, however, have stated their belief in the possibility of a distinctively Latin American music. Cuban composer Alejandro García Caturla, for example, said: “In order, however, to arrive at a genuinely Cuban music, it is necessary to work with the living folklore.”<sup>14</sup> Amadeo Roldán, also Cuban, goes even further to state he believes in a continental musical identity. He says:

Being myself an American composer [Cuban], my aim is, of course, first of all to attain a production thoroughly American in its substance, entirely apart from the European art; an art that we can call ours, continental, worthy of being universally accepted not on account of its exotic qualities (our music up to now has been accepted in Europe mainly upon the basis of its outlandish flavor, that brought something interesting, something queerly new, being received with the accommodating smile with which grown people face a child’s mischief, without giving to it any real importance); to produce a music capable of being accepted for its real significance, its intrinsic worth, for its meaning as a contribution of the New World to the universal art.<sup>15</sup>

More than seventy years have passed since the publication of the previous statement, and Latin American composers, although not North American composers of the United States, still seem to face similar problems and still claim for recognition. Venezuelan philosopher Ernesto Mayz Vallenilla suggests in his book, *América’s Problem*, that the anxious search for a Latin American originality is due to the fact that Latin America

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<sup>13</sup> Alan Howard Levy, *Musical Nationalism: American Composers’ Search for Identity* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983), 130.

<sup>14</sup> Alejandro García Caturla, “The Development of Cuban Music,” in *American Composers on American Music*, ed. Henry Cowell (California: Stanford University Press, 1933), 173.

<sup>15</sup> Amadeo Roldán, “The Artistic Position of the American Composer,” in *American Composers on American Music*, ed. Henry Cowell (California: Stanford University Press, 1933), 175.

“fights to attain a position in World History.”<sup>16</sup> He explains that this lack of confidence in being original rises from Latin Americans feeling “simple imitators of others, or heirs of a past (indigenous or Western) that does not belong to us as true *tradition*.” Vallenilla proposes that we must:

...afirmarnos en la creencia de que, haciendo lo que hagamos, y siendo fieles a la altura de nuestro propio *tempo histórico*, si lo hacemos con radicalidad y no nos traicionamos, puede ser que—sin proponérselo y sin siquiera saberlo—estemos alcanzando la *originariedad* de nuestro propio ser hombres del Nuevo Mundo y con ello, también, un estilo *original* de ser históricos dentro de la Historia Universal.

[...affirm ourselves in believing that, in doing what we do, and being honest to our own *time in history*, if we do it with commitment and we do not illude ourselves, perhaps—unconsciously—we may be reaching the *originality* of our own New World and with it, also, an *original* style of being historic within World History.]<sup>17</sup>

Like Vallenilla, Mexican composer Carlos Chávez, one of Latin America’s finest musical thinkers, also realized the issues of being historic and original in Latin America when, in his *Charles Eliot Norton Lectures* of 1958-1959 at Harvard, he said:

In the field of music our Latin American countries have often made an effort toward a national style. Nationalist composers have used folk material as a basis for their compositions. To try to be “national” seemed a good way to try to be personal. This has been very much in favor in Mexico and many other Latin American countries ever since the days of independence. It would be all right, but there are two or three disadvantages. To use folk material as a permanent expedient would be indeed limiting. Second, if the composer uses folk themes to the exclusion of his own, he will be giving up a very important part of his creative function. Third, the fact that a Mexican or Brazilian composer uses national folk themes, does not guarantee his acquiring a style of his own, or even a “national” style.

Now, it is true that our colonial life was somewhat passive; that our life did not begin to be really active until our independence. It is true, also, that if things are handed down to us ready-made instead of being developed independently, we do not fully integrate our tradition.

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<sup>16</sup> Ernesto Mayz Vallenilla, *El Problema de América*, 3d ed. (Caracas, Venezuela: Universidad Simón Bolívar, 1992), 41.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

However, in the integration of our musical tradition there are some interesting situations. True enough, Latin American musical culture does not have in its past any Bachs or Beethovens; Latin American countries so far have given to the world—in music or art in general—neither more nor less than what they could possibly have given. There may be impatient or pessimistic critics; but our countries have had a very peculiar historic development within which, with all its handicaps and contradictions, there seems to be a very consistent line of progressive development. We can trace back a very well-articulated past of our own...<sup>18</sup>

Chávez seems to have learned about identity and nationalism by intuition and experience.

Author Thomas Turino explains the complexities revolving the “peculiar historic development” of Latin American music:

...during the early to middle decades of the twentieth century, more inclusive, culturally based conceptions of the *nation* became prominent in Latin America, sometimes in the context of populist movements. It was not until this point that efforts to link formerly disenfranchised populations to the state got underway...populist nationalist movements in Latin America were state-initiated programs that challenged the traditional ruling oligarchies by so-called “modernizing” capitalist interests; populism occurred within programs to increase domestic and trans-state capitalist activity beyond the established ruling groups. Second, this situation correlated with the increasingly inclusive notions of the nation marked by the expansion of the franchise, concessions such as labor and land reforms, and increased forging of cultural links with subaltern groups within the state’s territory.<sup>19</sup>

Forging a cultural link with subaltern groups was deemed necessary in the process

because, Turino argues:

From Mao and Mugabe to Perón and Velasco, what is typically expressed is that a *new* national culture will be forged from the *best* of local culture combined with the *best* of “modern” (cosmopolitan) culture. The localist elements are important for emblematic distinction and to foster identification within the country. The cosmopolitan features are important to create iconicity with other nation-states and as the basis of acceptance and popularity abroad.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Carlos Chávez, *Musical Thought* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961), 13-14.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Turino, “Nationalism and Latin American Music: Selected Case Studies and Theoretical Considerations,” *Latin American Music Review* 24, no. 2 (2003): 169-170.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

Turino explains why cultural nationalism was extremely important in the agenda of populist governments:

The resultant need to create a “nation” where in many places a suitable identity unit did not exist, and even the notion of nation did not exist, led to major efforts in the realm of cultural nationalism. Cultural nationalism is the semiotic work of using expressive practices and forms to fashion the concrete emblems that stand for and create the “nation,” that distinguish one nation from another, and most importantly, that serves as the basis for socializing citizens to inculcate national sentiment.<sup>21</sup>

If national identity is constructed at the level of popular culture, it seems clear that art music can only become an emblem of a nation if promoted for and embraced by the masses. Additionally, to speak of a Latin American identity remains a very abstract idea although it is not impossible to state that the similar political and historical developments of Latin American countries have also created similar trends on the field of the arts and music. Turino writes that:

Nation-building requires time and constant effort and negotiation. As is well known, individual identities are multiply-constituted and allow for distinct nodes of identification and representation depending on the context of social interaction, such as gender, class, occupation, religion, region of residence, and national identity. Strong national sentiment does not negate regional sentiment or community identity.<sup>22</sup>

Many young nations of Latin America, especially in the Caribbean, are still in the process of nation-building. Turino acknowledges that not all nationalist projects in Latin America have been successful and that they are often not. He finalizes by posing a question:

Why have the contemporary ideologies and practices of nationalism, modernity, and capitalism typically spread as a unit throughout the post-colonial world? The techniques, goals, and rationales of *inclusive nationalism* and *expanding modernist capitalism* are structurally related because success in both depends on

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 174-75.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 200.

ever increasing numbers of active, willing, participants. In Latin America, Africa, and much of the post-colonial world, however, success remains uneven, and is often thwarted by the same structures of unequal capitalist development that helped inspire the response of inclusive nationalism in the first place.<sup>23</sup>

It is then possible to suggest that until Latin American countries are able to develop economically more evenly, most people in the continent will remain culturally isolated from each other.

The history of art music in Puerto Rico deserves, perhaps, special attention in the study of Latin American music. Puerto Rico has been politically and economically tied to the United States since 1952 as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. However, writer Malena Kuss points out that:

Culturally, Puerto Rico shares its roots with other Hispanic-American lands, especially Cuba and the Dominican Republic, its larger sisters in the chain of the Greater Antilles. In the words of Donald Thompson, music historian, academic, conductor and keen observer of San Juan's musical life through his columns in *The San Juan Star*, "Puerto Rico's present cultural condition can be described as rooted in Spain, richly modified by African influences, and in recent decades heavily urbanized through economic development, advanced systems of communication, and constant contact with patterns of U. S. urban life." The political status of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, defined in the language of a 1953 United Nations resolution as "in voluntary association with the United States" is a sensitive point to some. However, there is no question about the island's identification as a self-contained cultural entity, and it is so treated in the literature dealing with all disciplines within the field of Latin American Studies.<sup>24</sup>

This independent music culture not only thrives on the island but also in Latin American sections of New York City and other major urban centers in the United States. As a matter of fact, music has been one of the main symbols of national pride and cultural

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>24</sup> Malena Kuss, preface to *Music and Dance in Puerto Rico from the Age of Columbus to Modern Times: An Annotated Bibliography*, by Donald Thompson and Annie F. Thompson (Metuchen, N. J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1991), vi-vii.

resistance used by Puerto Ricans immigrants in the United States.<sup>25</sup> The growing number of Puerto Ricans in the United States contributes greatly to the complex task of defining the Latino identity of Puerto Ricans. Professor of Black and Puerto Rican studies, Juan Flores, expands on this subject:

...it is the Puerto Rican population that is most commonly pointed to as the most nagging “problem” presented by the need for a cultural fit between the Anglo-American north and the Hispanic south of the hemisphere... I attribute this special, and especially unfavorable, position and representation of Puerto Ricans to the colonial relation between the United States and their country of origin. Unlike the other Latino groups, the Puerto Rican diaspora hails from a nation that has languished in a dependent and tightly controlled political status for its entire history, a condition that has persisted throughout the twentieth century. To this day, more than one hundred years since U.S. troops landed on the Island in 1898 and the growing world power set up a government of military occupation, Puerto Rico remains strapped with an unresolved and vigilantly manipulated place in the world of modern nations. Thus, long after the wave of decolonization swept the so-called Third World in the post-World War II period, and at a time when the most fashionable theory of diplomatic affairs goes under the name of the “postcolonial,” this island nation is still a colony by all indicators of international relations, its economic and political life fully orchestrated by its mighty neighbor to the north, the putative leader of world democracy and sovereignty. Of course the euphemisms abound, such as “commonwealth” status or “free associated statehood,” as do the denials and convoluted circumlocutions, but the reality—and supposed anomaly—of direct bondage and lack of national autonomy stares the world in the face, and goes to condition every aspect of Puerto Rican life, including the migration process itself as well as the social experience of the emigrant community.<sup>26</sup>

Composer William Ortiz participates in this complex scenario of socio-cultural relations between the United States and Puerto Rico.

Ortiz was born in Salinas, Puerto Rico, in 1947, and raised in New York City.

His musical studies began at the Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico where he studied composition with Héctor Campos Parsi. He received a master’s degree in composition

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<sup>25</sup> Peter Manuel, Kenneth Bilby, and Michael Largey, *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 53.

<sup>26</sup> Juan Flores, *From Bomba to Hip-Hop: Puerto Rican Culture and Latino Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 8-9.

from the State University of New York at Stony Brook and a Ph.D. in composition from the State University of New York at Buffalo, where he studied with Lejaren Hiller and Morton Feldman. He has received commissions from the New York State Council for the Arts, the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra, the Toronto Guitar Society, and others. He has served as music critic of the *The San Juan Star* newspaper and currently teaches at the University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón. Of special importance are his 1995 Casals Festival Commission, the 1989 Music Prize from the Ateneo Puertorriqueño, his participation in the 1981 ISCM World Music Days in Brussels and the 1980 Felipe Gutiérrez Espinosa Award. His compositions are published and recorded by Ricordi, AM Percussion Publications, Smith Publications, Opus One Records, New World Records and Centuar Records. In 1996-1997, Ortiz was the composer in residence of the program “Music in Motion” held at the Atlantic Center for the Arts. Ortiz’ “Nuyorican” experience has been of great significance in his development as a composer. His Latino identity plays an important role in his compositions, and Ortiz is one of the most prominent Puerto Rican composers for percussion.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

While the literature for percussion has grown significantly in the last thirty years, much music exists in Latin America that is not known to performers and educators around the globe. One reason for this is the lack of interest by major publishing companies to invest in new music, many times thought of as being unreliable as far as sales. Another reason is the difficulty smaller companies have in distributing the compositions they choose to publish on a wider scale. In the specific case of Latin America, where government institutions publish some composers, a great number of compositions are published for a limited amount of time, thus quickly becoming unavailable.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, the skepticism of composers who do not want to lose the copyright of their own compositions also contributes to the lack of awareness of Latin American percussion music. Another contributing factor is the insignificant percentages and fees paid by most publishing houses to composers, which makes self-publishing more attractive for financial compensation. And, most important, the lack of networks of information that would allow the creation of databases locating composers and their compositions.<sup>28</sup>

### ***Need for the Study***

There are many reasons why the study of Latin American arts is necessary not only in Latin America but also in the United States. The Bureau of Census estimates that by 2050 the Latino Population of the United States will reach half that of Caucasian-

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<sup>27</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, *Music of Latin America* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1945), 10-18.

<sup>28</sup> Nobre, 48-49.

Americans and double the number of African-Americans. In a recent publication of The National Association for Music Education entitled “Readings on Diversity, Inclusion, and Music for All,” several articles address the need for revisions of the curriculum in order to reflect these social changes in American society. In an article entitled “Mariachi: Ethnic Music as a Teaching Tool,” author Keith R. Ballard reinforces the idea that music can help retain many Hispanic students who might drop out not feeling a part of the mainstream. Ballard begins his argument by relating the following data:

In California, the Hispanic population is increasing at record rates; whites are no longer the majority, making up only 47 percent of the state’s population. In Arizona, the Hispanic population increased by 88 percent over the last decade. States like Iowa, Colorado, Nebraska, Maine, New York, and Illinois have seen double-digit increases in their Hispanic populations. Hispanics are the fastest growing ethnic group in America, and the trend shows no sign of slowing down for the next fifty years. Hispanics are now considered the largest minority in America.<sup>29</sup>

The reasons why the teaching of World Music is important is better explained in another article in the same publication. Author C. Victor Fung explains that:

The long-standing claim of the superiority of Western art music (referring to the Western European tradition) has been increasingly considered problematic, as has been the manifestation of this belief in the music curriculum. The belief that Western art music is more natural, complex, expressive, and meaningful than other musics has come to be seen as both an intellectual and a moral problem. It is an intellectual problem because this belief is narrow-minded; it denies the naturalness, complexity, and meaningfulness of non-Western musics by ignoring the possibility of alternative aesthetics. It is a moral problem because it implies that non-Western musics and non-Western cultures are inferior. Today, through greater attention to and more research on non-Western musics, many have come to understand that the musics, like the societies, are based on different systems and philosophies. Musics from all cultures have begun to emerge in music programs as part of the ongoing debate on the inclusion of underrepresented groups in the musical canon and the curriculum of the nation’s schools. These

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<sup>29</sup> Keith R. Ballard and C. Rene Benavidez, “Mariachi: Ethnic Music as a Teaching Tool,” *MENC-The National Association for Music Education* (2003): 54.

changes in music education parallel changes in other aspects of American society, such as its laws and its academic societies.<sup>30</sup>

Interestingly, the art music of Latin America seems to fit perfectly the description of underrepresented groups in the musical canon. With the exception of a few composers and compositions, Latin American art music still is treated as inferior ethnic music. But this is not peculiar to the field of music, as described by artist Tomás Ybarra-Frausto:

...despite the growing presence of Latinos in today's America, the politics of inequity, asymmetry, and social exclusion persist, and the Latino imagination—so fundamental in its contributions to American culture—is still largely unrecognized and conspicuously absent in the consciousness of most people in the U.S. Similarly, the cultural production of most Central American and Caribbean groups is hardly acknowledged, except as a potential market niche for consumer products.<sup>31</sup>

This criticism makes it all the more important for scholars in the United States to embrace and promote the study of Latin American music and arts in their institutions.

Regarding the field of music in particular, there are gaps in the percussion repertoire that could perhaps be filled by many of these little-known compositions. William Ortiz is a good example of a composer with a significant body of percussion works that is of value to the field, but most of them are unknown to performers and educators because they are only available through the composer or small publishing houses. Additionally, the musical production and achievements of many Latin American composers have not been assessed in the area of percussion, which makes it difficult for the scholar to develop an understanding of what is unique about the percussion writing of these composers and what the tendencies of this repertoire are as a whole. The aesthetic

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<sup>30</sup> C. Victor Fung, "Rationales for Teaching World Musics," *MENC-The National Association for Music Education* (2003): 65.

<sup>31</sup> Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, "Latin American Culture and the United States in the New Millennium," in *Collecting Latin American Art for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Mari Carmen Ramírez and Theresa Papanikolas (Houston: University of Texas Press, 2002), 49.

nature of Latin American music also needs to be given closer attention so that its unique qualities are better understood by students, teachers, and performers. William Ortiz' work is especially relevant to the study of Latin American music and culture since his musical language is rooted, among other things, in the traditional music of the Caribbean.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

The main purpose of the present study is to introduce the percussion music of William Ortiz to a greater number of performers, educators, and scholars of Latin American music. A second purpose is the identification of unique traits of Latin American music in Ortiz' compositions. The third purpose is the discussion of issues that pertain to the study of Latin American identity and aesthetics.

### ***Limitations of the Study***

This study is limited by the almost non-existent body of scholarship available on Latin American art compositions for percussion. For this reason, an interview with the composer will be incorporated into the study to shed some light on issues that are difficult to research at the present time. The lack of substantial critical research on the Caribbean percussion repertoire also creates difficulties placing Ortiz' percussion music in that context.

### ***Definition of Terms***

The term Latin America, technically speaking, refers only to the "Portuguese and Spanish-speaking states created in the early 1820s following the wars of independence,

states that differed enormously in geographical and demographic scale, ethnic composition and economic resources, yet shared distinct historical and cultural traits.”<sup>32</sup> The term has been used loosely to refer to all of the Third World countries of the Americas. James Dunkerley explains: “this term is itself a Parisian concoction of the 1860s that sought to bestow a terminological unity upon a region that seemed to lack cultural, political, economic and even geographical coherence, particularly to outsiders and especially to Anglo-Americans.”<sup>33</sup> The use of the term art music is simply intended to distinguish a genre of music that has been cultivated primarily through a written (Western European) tradition as opposed to an oral traditional, as most folkloric and popular music genres in Latin America have been before the twentieth century.<sup>34</sup>

### *Design of the Study*

In this study, the author provides a stylistic analysis of certain elements and selected passages from William Ortiz’ percussion music. About one third of these pieces are for solo instruments. Another third is for percussion and another instrument, and the last third are chamber pieces, including two percussion quartets. Compositional traits discussed or alluded to in the literature review section of the paper are examined according to their relevance to Ortiz’ musical style. Rhythmic character, figures, concepts, and techniques are treated as prominent features of Ortiz’ style and, therefore,

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<sup>32</sup> John King, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Latin American Culture* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2004), i.

<sup>33</sup> James Dunkerley, “Latin America since independence,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Latin American Culture*, ed. John King (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 28.

<sup>34</sup> Nettl, Bruno, “Music,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), 431-433.

are given more focus than other musical elements such as melodic shape and intervals, texture and harmonic sonorities, and formal designs. Other elements such as compositional ideas, musical influences, underlying social commentary, and technical requirements in performance are treated in more general terms as supporting information. Below is a list with the title, date, and instrumentation of the works discussed in this paper:

1. *Tamboleo* (1972), for multiple percussion.
2. *Del Caserío* (1976, revised in 1985), for chamber ensemble.
3. *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.* (1979), for chamber ensemble.
4. *Street Music* (1980), for chamber ensemble.
5. *Bembé* (1981), for percussion quartet.
6. *Graffiti Nuyorican* (1983), for percussion and piano.
7. *Plena-Merengue* (1985), for chamber ensemble.
8. *Urbanización* (1985), for multiple percussion.
9. *Ghetto* (1987), for chamber ensemble.
10. *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines* (1987), for timpani.
11. *Rapeo* (1988), for snare drum.
12. *Loisai* (1993), for marimba (with some percussion) and bass clarinet.
13. *Eco para un grito gris* (1994), for marimba.
14. *Polifonía Salvaje* (1995), for percussion and alto saxophone.
15. *The Well-Tempered Clave* (2003), for percussion quartet.

### ***Organization of the Study***

Chapter II consists of a review of the literature that includes information on William Ortiz and his music. Chapter III is divided into four parts. In the first, the author briefly describes each composition as to provide a broad overview of Ortiz' percussion output and to explain the Spanish titles. In the second part some Latin American traits with regard to instrumentation, performance practice, and expressive markings are introduced to the reader. In the third part, the author discusses in more detail some of the most important rhythmic elements in Ortiz' percussion music. In the fourth part, some compositions are treated separately so that other musical elements such

as pitch, timbre, and form can be analyzed in context. Excerpts of the interview conducted by the author are inserted throughout the text to support the analysis of different elements and to clarify how the influence of Latin American traditional music in some of Ortiz' compositions for percussion affects the musical aesthetics of his music.

Chapter IV is comprised of a summary and conclusions of the research; and a provisory statement of William Ortiz' contribution to the field and Latin American percussion in particular.

## CHAPTER II

### SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### *Introduction*

Not much has been written about the music of William Ortiz. While he has been regarded as one of the most active and original composers in Puerto Rico today, no substantial work dealing with his music exists.<sup>35</sup> His status as a representative Puerto Rican composer, however, can be verified by his inclusion in virtually every existent source about Puerto Rico's contemporary music scene and his nomination for a Grammy Award in 2001 for his composition *Tropicalización*, the first nomination ever for a Puerto Rican composer of art music. He has also been featured in the German new music magazine *Musiktext*, where two articles he wrote, "Du-Wop and Dialectics" and "Musical Snobism," were published along with a chronological list of compositions and his "Street Music" for flute, trombone, and percussion.

#### *Related Literature on William Ortiz*

Author, critic, and musicologist Donald Thompson has provided most of the biographical information available on William Ortiz. Of significance are his entries in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and, along with composer Héctor Campos Parsi, in the *Diccionario de la Música Española e Hispanoamericana*. It is important to note that Thompson includes in the *New Grove* entry, as important pieces in Ortiz' development of a unique style, two compositions with crucial percussion roles:

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<sup>35</sup> Donald Thompson, *Concert Life in Puerto Rico, 1957-1992: Views and Reviews by Donald Thompson and Francis Schwartz* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: University of Puerto Rico Press, 1998), 697.

*Street Music* and *Graffiti Nuyorican*. Additionally, Thompson provides a selective list of works with a section devoted to percussion works only, which amplifies the importance of Ortiz' percussion output.<sup>36</sup> In the *Diccionario de la Música Española e Hispanoamericana*, an important remark to this study about Ortiz' music is included: "His music is based to a great extent on the cadences, rhythms and melodies of the Latino neighborhoods of the big cities of the United States. It is a music that is open, incisive and of great communicative power."<sup>37</sup> Thompson also reviewed one of the first concerts including Ortiz' music after the composer returned to Puerto Rico in 1987. In this review of Ortiz' *Street Music* for *The San Juan Star* newspaper Thompson wrote:

For a while this general kind of urban evocation (in music and elsewhere) was described as being "committed," or as constituting some kind of "statement." Well, I don't know about that, but I do know that Ortiz' music is always fresh, potent and interesting. Without calling his work derivative, I do see a relevant connection with some past music which in its day indicated a very promising line of development but one which I do not believe was taken up at the time: a line indicated in some of the dance numbers particularly of Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*. Is this what Ortiz' street music goes back to? One could do a lot worse.<sup>38</sup>

It is clear that Thompson does not know yet how to place Ortiz' music outside of a mainstream musical sensibility. Bernstein's use of Latin American resources is not a reflection of his cultural reality, but Ortiz' use is. In a later review, Thompson makes an important observation to this study about the nature of Ortiz' music of the 70s and 80s: "A great deal of Ortiz' previous work has been almost obsessively rhythmic and

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<sup>36</sup> Donald Thompson, "William Ortiz (Alvarado)," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), 764.

<sup>37</sup> Héctor Campos Parsi and Donald Thompson, "William Ortiz Alvarado," in *Diccionario de la Música Española e Hispanoamericana*, ed. Emilio Casares Rodicio (Madrid, Spain: Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 2001), 257-258.

<sup>38</sup> Thompson, *Concert Life in Puerto Rico*, 580.

percussive, much of it deliberately evocative of the mean streets and the bitter life of New York's *barrio*.”<sup>39</sup> It is true that rhythm is of paramount importance in Ortiz' musical language and, therefore, lends itself well to percussion, but equally significant is the fact that he writes idiomatically for percussion instruments. Thompson's review of a 1991 concert also relates to the important role percussion plays in Ortiz's music:

Ortiz, born in Puerto Rico and mainly raised in New York City, has found some very interesting things to say musically, linked chiefly to his vision of music as the distillation of experience. And the experiences which he has chosen to distill are those mainly associated with the mean streets of New York's Latino sections. Ortiz has spoken and written of the influences in his work of the rhythms, harmonies, cries and noises—the sonoral graffiti—of New York street corner hangouts.

These ideas have been successfully explored in Ortiz' music for small groups, music often based on percussion instruments and/or incorporating musical styles associated with “Street Music” (one of his titles). Here, an improvisatory style of performance can be very convincingly suggested, while a small group of performers can successfully evoke the joys, tensions, conflicts and schemes of a bunch of young people hanging loose on some street corner.<sup>40</sup>

The “sonoral graffiti” is indeed a very unique trait in many of his compositions for percussion as it is the centrality of percussion in his chamber music. An investigation of these traits, street sounds, and improvisatory style will be undertaken in order to understand better how they relate to Latin American aesthetics.

### *Related Literature by William Ortiz*

William Ortiz has written some about his music and musical ideas, which is of great value to this study. In an article entitled *A Panoramic View of Puerto Rican New Music*, he provides important information about the historical context of Puerto Rican music in which he participates today. He starts the article by pointing out that “Puerto

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 697.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 725-726.

Rico is a musical warehouse of traditional forms, dance and song” and that a “lively world of new music” is also another important part of the island’s musical life. This coupling of traditional and art musical devices is a significant aspect of his music. Ortiz continues by saying that in Puerto Rico “there is a search for a national way of expression, though the techniques may be universal.” This is a remark that also seems to relate to his concerns as a composer. He expands on this idea by warning that:

To fully understand this manifestation and cultural phenomena in Puerto Rican society, it should be taken into account the sociopolitical conditions from which this music emerged, sociopolitical conditions that have been shaped primarily by the colonialism imposed on Puerto Rico first by Spain and then by the United States. One segment of the new music world is engaged in the simmering independence movement, and speaks out against all non-Puerto Rican influences. But the most active forces in Puerto Rican new music have fought to bring to the island the latest musical currents from around the world, and many of the composers have arrived at unique and enticing fusions of old and new.<sup>41</sup>

Ortiz is certainly part of the second group of composers because he was raised and educated in the United States and because he does not restrict his musical language to national elements. However, he has a peculiar interest in the social conditions affecting Puerto Ricans both on the island and in his most immediate surroundings: New York City, Spanish Harlem and Brooklyn in particular. His involvement in and lucid understanding of the socio-cultural reality of Puerto Ricans can be seen in his writings. He says, for example, that after the successful implantation in the 1950s of the industrialization program called “Operation Bootstrap,” things started to break down in the late 1960s. He proceeds:

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<sup>41</sup> William Ortiz, “A Panoramic View of Puerto Rican New Music,” in *Latinoamérica Música* [online magazine] (Accessed 7 July 2004) [database on-line], available from <http://www.latinoamerica-musica.net/historia/ortiz-panorama-en.html>. (First published in *World New Music Magazine*, no. 6, Cologne, September 1996).

The “Shining Star of the Caribbean” or the “Isle of Enchantment,” as Puerto Rico is known for its model of economic growth, starts to reveal its limitations and weaknesses. The “escape value” of Puerto Rican immigrants to the USA turns sour due to racism and oppression. The economic inequality, at first hidden by the initial improvement in living conditions now becomes clear. By the mid-sixties the nationalistic music movement begins to extinguish itself.<sup>42</sup>

These problems Ortiz speaks of seem to have been a part of his experience in New York City and have left a mark in the composer’s musical language and certainly in his percussion music. After discussing the tendencies of several composers, Ortiz defines his own aesthetics by saying that Puerto Rico is “a strange hybrid of the US-American dream and the problems of the Third World.” He continues:

Out of this reality there emerges a group of composers who embraced various alternatives to express this period of chaos with artistic confidence. This generation of composers has in effect synthesized the two musical tendencies which Campos-Parsi wrote about in 1975 [conservative versus avant-garde]. What we see is the leaking and crumbling of the barriers that separate these two currents, leading to a post-modernist range of hybridization, and a re-definition of nationalist and neo-romantic tendencies with minimalism, if any, only hinted at.<sup>43</sup>

These tendencies will be verified in more detail during the analysis of selected passages of the percussion pieces here discussed. Broadly speaking, they constitute the union of elements or interactions of varied levels between fine art and popular music. Speaking about his own work, Ortiz states that “instrumental color and experimental forms are interesting aspects of his music, which is communicative, vital and anti-dogmatic.”<sup>44</sup> Additionally, the composer says that two fundamental ideas are present in some of his music:

1. The need to convert the language of the street into a legitimate instrument.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

2. The need to express musically his experience as a Puerto Rican raised in New York.<sup>45</sup>

The presence of these fundamental ideas in his music are rationalized in another article Ortiz wrote entitled *Musical Snobism*. Ortiz finds that the deficient state of contemporary music in Puerto Rico, and Latin America in general, is a result of the colonial European heritage that established, among other things, a supposedly superior musical culture in the New World. Ortiz says that this “tendency to deify the composers and music of the past is a cultural phenomenon that we have inherited from Europe...this process of deification has divided music into holy and malicious, high art and low art.”<sup>46</sup> Ortiz argues that not only music educators but also music professionals are guilty of excluding the public from participating more actively in musical performances, that is, thinking creatively and being open to new experiences. He continues by saying that “the professional is interested in perpetuating European aesthetics and techniques in order to maintain his status and prestige as ‘connoisseur’ of good music.”<sup>47</sup> Ortiz advocates the end of this Eurocentrism by saying that:

In analysis there exist only two kinds of music: well-made music and badly-made music. The rest is a thing of personal taste. The only criteria that should be considered is artistic excellence and not necessarily popularity or reputation. If we would like to think that concert music has the noble commendation of transcending those dichotomies of privileged-oppressed, superior-inferior, rich-poor, they-us, it would be healthy indeed to avoid pretentiousness. The road to the basic musical instincts of the ordinary mortal should be sought. That human being from whom music is derived, for whom and why it is created and without whom it cannot exist. It seems to me that the experts of concert music have lost contact with the tastes and realities of the people. Most likely for considering

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> William Ortiz, “Musical Snobism,” in *Latinoamérica Música* [online magazine] (Accessed 7 July 2004) [database on-line], available from <http://www.latinamerica-musica.net/puntos/ortiz/snob-en.html>. (Published in *World New Music Magazine*, no. 6, Cologne, September 1996).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

these inferior—something that has been perpetuated by the popular superstition that classical music is by definition superior to popular music.<sup>48</sup>

This interest in the immediacy of music and its communicative power are of primary importance in Ortiz' music, which is non-exclusive and makes use of whatever resources are appropriate. Perhaps that is why Ortiz often includes verbal passages as well as popular music materials in several of his instrumental pieces, in order to maximize the communication of his ideas to a broad audience. Ortiz ends the article with an autobiographical statement of how he has avoided musical snobism:

As a composer, I have always tried to relate my music to life about me. How to achieve this integration in today's society, with new technological and scientific advances and with new social problems is a challenge. What we definitely don't need is any snobism to undermine whatever intent there is to unify our fragile and fragmented musical culture. I would like to think that today there has evolved a new kind of musician. A free-thinker that accepts, admires and gives validity to all sonic resource that has the potential to inspire and create. Musicians that do not base their aesthetic considerations on high culture versus low culture. This would permit honesty and truth—to seek beauty where ever it is—without denying this liberty to others.<sup>49</sup>

The sonic resources that have inspired William Ortiz have been those of the streets of New York City and those sounds deeply rooted in the traditional music of Latin America. They are revealed by the composer in his most important article about his music, entitled *Du-Wop and Dialectic*, published in the periodical *Perspectives of New Music* within a symposium entitled "Being a Composer in America."

As a Puerto Rican who was raised in New York City, I can remember clearly as a twelve-year-old hearing the chants of street gangs passing by our housing project at 1:00 A.M., and singing groups harmonizing on the street corner. I have been able to recall some of this sonic material and express it in the form of motives,

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

harmonies, shouts, themes, and so forth, which have served as the basis of some of my compositions.<sup>50</sup>

One must emphasize that Ortiz' experience is that of other Latin American and African-American minority groups living in New York and that for him music is a product of its environment.<sup>51</sup> Although Ortiz describes some of these influences as part of a soul-jazz repertoire, which does not seem to relate to the reality of Latin American people, recent research has shown that Latinos were also practitioners of rock 'n' roll and recreational doo-wop in the fifties and sixties.<sup>52</sup>

An important musical development in New York and Puerto Rico in the 1970s that certainly affected Ortiz' music was salsa. The creation of this genre of music has been a heated debated among popular musicians. A newspaper interview from that time exposes some of the issues surrounding the development and aesthetics of salsa:

Titet Curet is the composer most admired today by salsa bands, singers, and performers. Considered an authority on questions of Latin music, Curet offers his impressions of salsa, including his view that salsa music is nothing new.

Avance: What do you understand by salsa music?

Curet: Simply a mixture of bright and lively rhythms which have really always existed. Salsa as a rhythm in itself doesn't exist. It's really just a word which has been applied to this combination of rhythms.

Avance: What exactly are these rhythms?

Curet: Well, the *guaguancó*, the *guaracha*, the *son montuno*, the *rumba*, the *mambo*, the *pachanga*, with some new ideas in the arrangements.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> William Ortiz, "Du-Wop and Dialectic," *Perspectives of New Music* 26, no. 1 (1988): 215.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Deborah Pacini Hernández, "Amalgamating Musics: Popular Music and Cultural Hybridity in the Americas," in *Musical Migrations: Transnationalism and Cultural Hybridity in Latin/o America, Volume 1*, ed. Frances R. Aparicio and Cándida F. Jáquez (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 15.

<sup>53</sup> Manuel Silva Casanova, "Salsa no es nada Nuevo: Curet Alonso," in *Music in Puerto Rico: A Reader's Anthology*, ed. Donald Thompson (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2002), 119.

These several rhythms listed by Curet are Cuban music genres, which is the reason why some musicians discredit salsa as being a Puerto Rican creation. However, Puerto Rican musicians have been crucial to the development of salsa to the extent that it has become a symbol of Puerto Rican identity. The same newspaper suggests that salsa will develop into that symbol.

Our analysis of the characteristics of salsa has brought us face to face with a discouraging but undeniable reality: that the Puerto Rican has not had, at least during the present century, a rhythm—a melos—which the world might recognize as representative of our culture...Perhaps flowing with the current of a whole century of transculturation, the creative energy which should have gone into our own music has been ably controlled through radio and other means of communication and learning. For that reason we still lack a genre to symbolize us internationally, as the *joropo* symbolizes Venezuelans, the *cumbia* the Colombians, the *ranchera* the Mexicans and calypso and reggae the Jamaicans. Could salsa be our musical symbol?<sup>54</sup>

The salsa craze represented not only a musical development but social changes affecting African Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other minority groups after the Civil Rights Movement. Salsa scholar Marisol Berríos-Miranda argues that “Puerto Rican musical identity and salsa are inseparable, because Puerto Ricans in New York made salsa a political movement in the 1970s.”<sup>55</sup> Musically speaking, they were also responsible for changes in instrumentation, performance style and technique, and for including “many different Latin American genres in salsa” such as the Puerto Rican *plena*, *bomba*, *seis*, and *aguinaldo*; the Dominican *merengue*, the Colombian *cumbia*, and the Venezuelan *gaita*.<sup>56</sup> Casanova documented the lasting impression of salsa to that generation:

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 118-119.

<sup>55</sup> Marisol Berríos-Miranda, “Is Salsa a Musical Genre?,” in *Situating Salsa: Global Markets and Local Meanings in Latin Popular Music*, ed. Lise Waxer (New York: Routledge Press, 2002), 23.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 28-29.

Whether seen as a step backward in popular music or as a mixture of old Afro-Cuban rhythms or perhaps only as the *bombas* and *guaguancós* of Cortijo in new arrangements of the 70s, salsa music will take its place in history as a cultural phenomenon of our time. Singers, musicians, arrangers, composers of concert music, composers of popular music, musicologists: all are talking about salsa. Puerto Rican and New York newspapers devote entire pages to the ‘salsa phenomenon.’ Salsa festivals attract tens of thousands of *salseros* to basketball courts, baseball parks, and sports stadiums, where the most popular bands offer concerts, “operas” and “hand-to-hand” competitions which last twelve or thirteen hours without interruption.

While salsa has experienced the greatest acceptance in the slums, the housing projects and other areas inhabited by the poor and middle classes, the impact of these rhythms (especially the *guaguancó*) has also reached higher economic levels...<sup>57</sup>

Ortiz was one of those composers affected by that movement and he has stated that several of his compositions, including *Graffiti Nuyorican*, *Bembé*, *Ghetto*, *Urbanización*, *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, *La Clave Bien Temperada*, and *del Caserío*, have elements derived from salsa. Ortiz explains the term:

“Salsa” is the catchall denomination for the commercial and popular rhythms of Latin music. The music was developed in New York by Puerto Ricans. It stems from Cuban music with its wealth of African elements. It is a powerful cultural force, acting as an instrument of cohesion for oppressed people, but at the same time salsa is a commodity, packaged for sale by a multimillion-dollar music industry in New York. Commercial promotion of salsa corrupts and is destructive of the cultural value of this music, stifling its artistic quality. Yet in the Puerto Rican barrios of the United States and in the island itself, salsa inspires great masses of working-class Puerto Ricans as an expression considered their own.<sup>58</sup>

Two elements from the above quotation should be highlighted as they play a significant role in Ortiz’ music: his knowledge of the “popular rhythms” of Latin American music and his awareness of the social implications behind that music. The composer, as a matter of fact, uses these popular and traditional rhythms in his music both to recall a familiar sound and texture, or to develop his musical ideas from these rhythms, but as

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<sup>57</sup> Manuel Silva Casanova, “¡Salsa!,” in *Music in Puerto Rico: A Reader’s Anthology*, ed. Donald Thompson (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2002), 114.

<sup>58</sup> Ortiz, “Du-Wop and Dialectic,” 217.

abstract resourceful patterns. Perhaps the most pertinent remark by the composer about the importance of percussive sounds in his music happens when the composer says:

A music grounded in the living reality of Latinos in the city is the natural, almost spontaneous expression of drum rhythms daily created in the streets. Street drumming (and for that matter street harmonizing) arose as a cultural vehicle for young Puerto Ricans feeling the weight of economic deprivation, the distance of traditional forms, and the absence of “high” culture and other creative media (its visual counterpart being graffiti). On any given summer night Latinos and blacks will drum together in a city park, street corner, or rooftop.<sup>59</sup>

Ortiz’s handling of rhythm seems to be as spontaneous as those he describes above. The improvisatory character in some of his music challenges the analyst seeking common forms of musical development.

Broadly speaking, Ortiz describes his musical dialectic as having two basic elements: first, the street theme or motive being quoted or alluded to; and secondly, the original material he composes. Ortiz ends the article by commenting on the importance of research in this area of musical composition that seems to be very important not only to the study of his music, but to that of many other Latin American composers.

It is my hope that this discourse has opened up questions and awakened interest in a socio-musical resource too often ignored or simply unrecognized in art music. The re-creation of the urban street-music experience incorporated and absorbed within the creation of a new musical experience is significant in revealing for bourgeois and aristocratic audiences the real foundations of art music, which are sociological and cultural, and are hidden by the distortions of the ideological everyday consciousness of such audiences. What is being synthesized has much to do with the kaleidoscopic vigor of American life; it conveys a notion that this vigor has its roots in the values of “popular” life—its communality, its fervor, its lack of sophistication, its authenticity, and an intuition that this life involves contradictions which, though at times tending towards chaos, must be affirmed before they can be transcended.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 217-218.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 223.

Much Latin American music has been neglected or considered inferior because of its connection to popular art forms. It seems that an understanding of the aesthetic nature of this music might be helpful for a better appreciation of its intrinsic traits, and necessary in documenting its development and characteristics.

## CHAPTER III

### STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN ELEMENTS AND SELECTED PASSAGES FROM WILLIAM ORTIZ' PERCUSSION MUSIC

#### *Introduction*

Ortiz' percussion output covers a wide variety of instrumental resources in, virtually, all major areas of the field: percussion ensemble, four-mallet marimba, timpani, snare drum, multiple percussion, and ethnic percussion. He explains his attraction to this diverse medium by saying that:

Percussion instruments offer a wider sound palette in which to work. As a composer I am interested in the infinite array of timbres and sound possibilities in percussion. Its appeal to me is both at a visceral and at a metaphorical level. The potential of percussion is huge. Percussion music still has not been given its due. There are so many avenues to explore.<sup>61</sup>

As a matter of fact, he has explored many facets of percussion writing while retaining the basic characteristics of his compositional style. He has composed five solos, three duos for percussion and another instrument, two percussion quartets, and six chamber pieces with significant percussion roles.

#### *Brief Description of Compositions and Explanation of Titles*

##### *Solos*

*Tamboleo*, loosely translated as drumming or to drum,<sup>62</sup> is Ortiz' first composition for solo percussion from 1972. It requires just a conga, a tenor drum, a snare drum, and a foot bass drum. Through the use of cross rhythms, Ortiz is able to develop an extended

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<sup>61</sup> William Ortiz, interview by author, 26 March 2005, Norman, electronic mail correspondence, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

polyrhythmic texture for approximately eight minutes with very limited instrumental resources.

A later composition (1985) also for solo multiple percussion, but longer and with a larger set-up, is *Urbanización*. The composer provides the following program notes:

*Urbanización* was conceived as an expression of the sounds of the inner-city. The interjected “vocalized graffiti,” which also includes a traditional Spanish nursery rhyme, serves as an emotional outlet to transmit the attitudes of the urban streets. This “vocalized graffiti” is also the source material from which the rhythmic structure of the entire work emanates. It was written for Anthony Miranda in 1985 and has a duration of approximately 10 minutes.<sup>63</sup>

*Urbanización* includes a cowbell, a large suspended cymbal, a snare drum, a tom-tom, a bass drum with pedal, bongos, two congas, and two timpani. Each instrument has a separate line showing Ortiz’ interest in polyphonic writing as well as in challenging the percussionist’s independence.

*Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines* is an extended solo of approximately eleven minutes for four timpani composed in 1987 and dedicated to percussionist Jan Williams. Ortiz explores the resonant, orchestral quality of the instrument through contrasting durations, articulation, motives, and textures. Ortiz explains the title: “The title is a poetic metaphor. I’m using rhythms (figurines) that are of my bi-lingual (Spanglish) culture.”<sup>64</sup>

A much shorter solo of approximately three-minute is *Rapeo* for snare drum composed in 1988. It is dedicated to the Stuart Saunders Smith and published in a collection of snare drum solos entitled *The Noble Snare*. This “rap” for snare drum

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<sup>63</sup> William Ortiz, *Urbanización*, performance notes (New York: A.M. Percussion Publications, 1992), ii.

<sup>64</sup> William Ortiz, correspondence with the author, 8 October 2002, Norman, electronic mail correspondence, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

combines both North American and Latin American rhythms. Ortiz explores the limitations of a single snare drum in playing polyphonic and colorful music.

The last percussion solo by Ortiz is *Eco para un Grito Gris* of 1994, dedicated to Puerto Rican percussionist Orlando Cotto. Translated literally the title means “Echo for a Gray Scream.”<sup>65</sup> It is for a five-octave marimba and lasts approximately six minutes. The entire range of the instrument is used along with different textures. These derive from distinct gestures that unify the composition.

### *Duos*

*Graffiti Nuyorican* is one of Ortiz’ most important compositions for percussion from 1983. Written for piano and percussion, it was commissioned by The National Association of Puerto Rican Composers. The vocalized and sonoral graffiti play a central role in the design of the composition, which integrates avant-garde and traditional elements. It lasts about eleven minutes and the percussion player uses two congas, claves, timbales, a large cymbal, cowbell, bongos, and a vibraphone. The pianist also plays cowbell and maraca.

*Loaisai*, for bass clarinet and percussion, was composed in 1993 and is dedicated to the Duo Contemporain. The percussionist plays mainly marimba but also a tenor drum, a snare drum, and a large suspended cymbal. *Loaisai*, Ortiz explains, “is what Latinos call the ‘Lower East Side.’ It’s a phonetic deformation or Spanglish.”<sup>66</sup> The composition lasts approximately five minutes.

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<sup>65</sup> Ortiz, interview, 26 March 2005.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

Another duo with a wind instrument is *Polifonía Salvaje*, or savage polyphony. It is for alto saxophone and percussion. The percussionist plays two congas, bongos, and a suspended cymbal. The work incorporates fast, *ad libitum* playing at the beginning and end of the piece while the middle section is metered and imitative in character. It was written in 1995 and it lasts approximately five minutes.

### *Quartets*

Written in 1981 for four percussionists, *Bembé* is a large-scale composition that because of improvisation opportunities can last over fifteen minutes. The Latin American traditional drumming influences are widespread making the composition sound almost as if improvised on the spot. Player one uses two congas; player two uses two congas, cowbell, and bongos; player three uses two congas, claves, guiro, and bongos; and player four uses timbales and one conga.

*La Clave Bien Temperada* is a much shorter polyphonic composition, circa three minutes, written in 2003 for four percussionists playing four pairs of claves. A quadraphonic effect is desired so the performers are instructed to stand apart as far as possible. The title has a double meaning making a playful reference to J. S. Bach's *The Well-Tempered Clavier* but also the spiciness associated with some Latin American dishes.

### *Chamber Music*

Composed in 1976 and revised in 1985, *Del Caserío* is for a small salsa-like ensemble of trumpet, saxophone, trombone, electric guitar, double bass and percussion.

Ortiz fuses traditional popular music elements with the dissonant harmonic language often found in twentieth-century art music. The percussionist plays suspended cymbal, conga, cowbell, bongo, timbales, claves, and maracas. Its duration is approximately fifteen minutes.

A large-scale dramatic work from 1979, lasting approximately thirty minutes, is *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.* for narrator-actor, percussion ensemble, and electronic tape. Six percussionists play three congas, claves, cowbell, bongos, suspended cymbal, timbales, tambourine without jingles, four wine bottles and six beer cans. Ortiz won the *Felipe Gutiérrez Espinosa* award with this composition in 1980. The text is by Pedro Pietri and Sandra Esteves.

Another important composition in Ortiz' percussion catalogue is *Street Music*, or *Música de la Calle*. Salsa elements, vocalized and sonoral graffiti, and a unique approach to timbre create a rich texture with economy of means. It was composed in 1980 for a flutist playing flute, alto flute, and piccolo; a trombonist; and two or three percussionists. Instruments required are: vibraphone, brake drum, snare drum, low pitched gong, triangle, conga, and three roto toms. Its performance lasts approximately nine minutes.

Written for the East Buffalo Media Association in 1985, *Plena-Merengue* is a trio for alto saxophone, electric guitar, and percussion. The alternation and pairing of a Puerto Rican rhythm with a Dominican one serve as the main idea for this unpretentious and dance-like composition. The percussionist is required to use a *pandereta* and two congas while the guiro and claves are handled by the other players. Its duration is about six minutes.

*Ghetto* is a dramatic work from 1987 for singer-narrator, flute, amplified guitar, and percussion. Timpani, bass drum, woodblock, maracas, large suspended cymbal, two congas, bongos, thunder sheet, garbage can top, claves, and vibra slap are required. Ortiz uses the text of several Nuyorican poets. The ensemble text-paints the lyrics, which incorporate several references to the music and culture of Puerto Ricans in New York. Approximate performance duration is twenty-two minutes.

### ***Instrumentation, Performance Practice, and Expressive Markings***

Before an analysis of selected stylistic traits of Ortiz' percussion music is undertaken, it is important to discuss briefly the composer's choices of traditional instruments and the performance practice associated with them. Aside from the use of standard Western orchestral instruments that appear in Ortiz' percussion output, such as timpani, xylophone, snare drum, bass drum, gong, tenor drum, triangle, woodblock, and cymbals; it is interesting to note the large majority of percussion instruments to belong to the American and, more significantly, the Latin American family of instruments. They include congas, claves, timbales, *cencerros* (cowbells), bongos, maracas, guiros, cabazas, vibra-slap (contemporary version of the *quijada*, jawbone of a horse), *pandereta* (Puerto Rican frame drum), marimba, vibraphone, and roto-toms. Other "urban instruments" are also found such as break drums, thunder sheet, garbage can top, wine bottles, beer cans, and wind chimes. The only other ethnic instrument not belonging to this American family of instruments is the tabla, which appear in *Suite: Tercer Mundo*.

Of particular interest is the fact that Ortiz requests traditional performance techniques for these Latin American instruments. These techniques are integral to the

appropriate sound desirable in many traditional Latin American genres. For example, his conga parts require not only the ordinary, open tone played with the hand but also slap, muted, and bass tones, rolls, and glissandi.

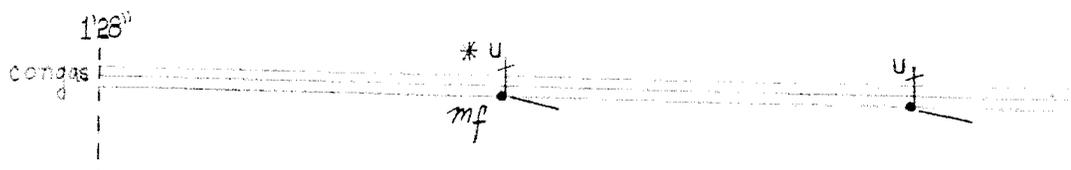
In example one, from the beginning of *Bembé*, all players have congas. Player one plays rim shots (or slap tones) on the high drum and open tones on the low drum. Player four only uses one conga and has muted tones. Player two also has slap tones but on the low drum, which sounds different from when playing on a high conga. What is important here is that these different tones not only enhance the expressiveness of these drums but also give distinct colors to each part so that they are all heard, since one of the challenges in writing for an homogeneous ensemble like this is textural clarity. Although player three does not have a special stroke, he plays in a different meter (2/4) thus, retaining his individuality.

**EXAMPLE 1** (*Bembé*, mm. 6-11)

Example two shows the notation Ortiz uses for performing an elbow glissando on the conga. There are three lines, each referring to a drum. The use of the lowest drum is very appropriate since with a loose head more pressure can be applied and a more distinct pitch modulation can be heard. Ortiz' specific instructions read: "Downward gliss.

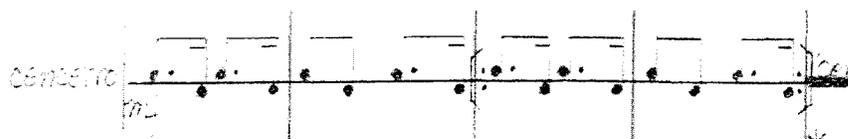
produced by placing the elbow with pressure on the conga head striking with the other hand around the rim and gradually raising the elbow.”

**EXAMPLE 2** (*124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.* conga glissando)



Cowbell parts are also given specific performance instructions such as playing near or away from the mouth of the instrument, and inside of the instrument when performing a roll. Once again these simple requirements increase the number of colors available to the composer and challenge the performer. In example three, a cowbell ostinato used in *Bembé* is shown. Ortiz’ instruction reads: “The cencerro is notated the following way: below the line (play near the open edge) and above the line (play near the closed end).” The sound “near the open edge” is fuller and more resonant than the sound on the opposite side of the instrument.

**EXAMPLE 3** (*Bembé* Cowbell Ostinato)



Example four, also from *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, explores more discrete colors possible on the cowbell. Ortiz explains how to obtain them: “Play up and down the length of the cencerro, from the open edge to the upper end, varying in striking with the tip and middle of the stick.” The notation for the congas, bongos, and timbales is also relevant to this discussion: “play, on the head indicated, in a circular motion around the rim and through the center with the closed fingers (palm) of the hand, ad libitum + as fast as possible.”

**EXAMPLE 4** (*124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, near the beginning of the second movement on page ten)

Congas (high + low congas) B<sup>11</sup> ↓  
 Congas 13<sup>11</sup> ↓  
 Bongos (both heads)  
 Timbales (both heads)  
 (narrator) faint his breath smells like an endless cemetery his  
 todo el mundo le huele el aliento a interminable cementerio se le

The parts for timbales include both the sound of the heads and the shells of the instrument in addition to rim shots and elbow glissandi. Example five shows an excerpt from *Graffiti Nuyorican* where the percussionist moves quickly from vibraphone to bongos, to timbales, to congas, and back to bongos. Two grace notes are played on the low drum followed by two sixteenth notes on the high drum; they serve as embellishments and are very common in traditional timbale playing, although usually performed on the high-pitched drum.

**EXAMPLE 5** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 65-67)

perc. bongos timb. (on shell) con. bon.

In example six, the timbales player starts a section near the end of *Del Caserío*. The contrasting metallic sound of the shells against the smoother sound of the membranes enrich the texture, create distinct colors, and make the part more interesting for the percussionist.

**EXAMPLE 6** (*Del Caserío*, mm. 158-160)

The image shows a musical score for six staves, likely representing different instruments. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 138. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Key annotations include 'mf' (mezzo-forte) on the second, third, and fourth staves, '(on shell)' above the fifth staff, and '(f)' (forte) below the sixth staff. There are also some handwritten-style markings like 'X' and 'a' on the fifth and sixth staves respectively. The score is divided into two measures by a vertical bar line.

Other specific techniques are also applied in bongo, *pandereta*, and guiro parts, although to a lesser extent than the parts for congas, timbales, and cowbell.

Of additional interest in Ortiz' approach to performance practice is the fact that small percussion instruments are also delegated to other instrumentalists. This is clearly a facet of many Latin American musical traditions, including salsa.<sup>67</sup> In *Plena-Merengue*, for instance, the guitar player plays claves at some points and the saxophonist plays guiro. Even though the clave part presents no problems to the guitar player, the guiro part is more challenging because it demands a crisp, delicate touch and rhythmic control from the saxophone player.

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<sup>67</sup> Charley Gerard, *Salsa!: The Rhythm of Latin Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Tempe, Arizona: White Cliffs Media, Inc., 1998), 29-30.

**EXAMPLE 7** (*Plena-Merengue*, mm. 145-148)

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Example 7, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system has three staves: the top staff is for saxophone with the instruction "saxophonist plays quiro:" and a circled 'x' above it; the middle staff is for piano with a 2/4 time signature, a circled '7', and a dynamic marking of *mp*; the bottom staff is for piano with a 2/4 time signature, a circled '7', and a dynamic marking of *f*. The second system has three staves: the top staff is for piano with a circled '7' and a dynamic marking of *f*; the middle staff is for congas with the instruction "(claves)" and a circled '7', and a dynamic marking of *f*; the bottom staff is for congas with the instruction "(on vbra)" and a circled '7', and a dynamic marking of *f*.

Similarly, in *Graffiti Nuyorican* the pianist has a rather complex task of playing a cowbell ostinato and singing at the same time.

**EXAMPLE 8** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, pianist's cowbell and vocal parts)

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Example 8, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system has one staff for cowbell with the instruction "cencerro" above it and a circled '7' below it, and a dynamic marking of *f* with the instruction "(pianist plays cencerro)". The second system has one staff for vocal with the instruction "(pianist sings:)" above it and a circled '7' below it, and a dynamic marking of *f*. The vocal line includes the lyrics "el a-quí-ce-ro" and "el 2-quí-ce-ro".

In *Ghetto*, the singer is in charge of playing claves as a traditional *sonero* or *rumbero* would.<sup>68</sup> The flute player also becomes a percussionist at some point in the piece.

<sup>68</sup> Ned Sublette, *Cuba and its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2004), 266 and 336.

**EXAMPLE 9** (*Ghetto*, mm. 169-171)

Singer/Narrator plays claves:

$\text{♩} = 82$

*mp*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

C. B. C. B. 3

tr.

3

In similar fashion, percussionists and other instrumentalists are often required to sing, recite, or shout in Ortiz' percussion compositions. This feature is common in the context of salsa performance and many other Latin American traditions, especially Afro-derived musical forms.<sup>69</sup> In *Street Music*, for example, the quartet sings as a chorus always in unison:

**EXAMPLE 10** (*Street Music*, mm. 66-67)

(\* - all sing on D)

$\text{♩} = 82$

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

hi lo and a kin and a kin a hi lo and a kin and a kin

hi lo and a kin and a kin a hi lo and a kin and a kin

hi lo and a kin and a kin a hi lo and a kin and a kin

5/4

3/4

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

<sup>69</sup> Gerard, 29-30.

In *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, the percussionists act and sing in doo-wop harmony style near the end of the piece. This is the same type of street singing Ortiz heard and participated in during his youth.<sup>70</sup>

**EXAMPLE 11** (*124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, mm. 1-4 of the third movement)

Musical score for Example 11, showing a vocal line with lyrics "shu-wop du-wa" and a bass line. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 60. The score is in 4/4 time and features a doo-wop style harmony.

In the multiple percussion solo *Tamboleo*, the composition starts with the percussionist simply singing, before the drums are introduced.

**EXAMPLE 12** (*Tamboleo*, mm. 1-3)

Musical score for Example 12, showing a vocal line with lyrics "TAM-BO-LE-O" and a bass line. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 80. The score is in 4/4 time and features a percussive style. The name "William Ortiz" is written in the upper right corner.

Ortiz explains the role of the human voice in his instrumental compositions:

The human voice I use more as a sound (timbre) than a language. It's what I call *vocalized graffiti*. There may be certain inflections, rhythms, attitudes and cadences that may communicate the emotion, atmosphere or soulfulness that I am after in a piece. A scream, hum, speech, etc. can be enlisted in the contrapuntal presentation of the sonic material as part of the overall texture. Always making sure that the flow of materials of diverse sonic qualities are presented as something integral.<sup>71</sup>

In *Polifonía Salvaje*, shouts are integrated in hoquet fashion with the sounds of the saxophone, congas, bongos, and cymbal, creating a colorful texture.

<sup>70</sup> Ortiz, interview, 26 March 2005.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

**EXAMPLE 13** (*Polifonía Salvaje*, fourth system on page one)

Musical score for Example 13, showing four staves: Saxophone (Sax.), Bongoes, Platillo (Plat.), and Congas. The Saxophone part features a melodic line with lyrics "(hablar)" and notes "ya", "ja", "ya", "ja". The Bongoes part has lyrics "(hablar)", "ya", "ja", "ya". The Congas part has lyrics "(hoquet)", "ya", "ja", "ya". Dynamics include *p*, *f*, and *i.v.* (in vivo).

In *La Clave Bien Temperada* tongue clicks, instead, are used as a vocal effect.

**EXAMPLE 14** (*La Clave Bien Temperada*, mm. 8-9)

Musical score for Example 14, showing four staves of Tongue Clicks. The score is divided into two systems, each with four staves. Dynamics include *p*, *mp*, and *mf*.

Some of this vocalized graffiti represents the “language of the street” Ortiz is fascinated with and utilizes in his compositions.

Although Ortiz seems to downplay—in the quotation above—the verbal meaning of the texts he uses, it is clear that his subjects are part of a rich Caribbean, and Latin American, cultural tradition concerning the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized; like in this passage from the solo *Urbanización*, where the percussionist must handle not only several, often independent, layers of percussion music but also the vocal part.

**EXAMPLE 15** (*Urbanización*, mm. 80-81)

The musical score consists of a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "I ne-ver went to col-lege I ne-ver went to school but when it comes to boo-gie I'm an ed-u-ca-ted fool". The piano accompaniment is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The right hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the left hand plays a bass line. Dynamics include *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *p* (piano), and *f* (forte).

Scholar Juan Flores, for example, discusses that important trait of Puerto Rican music by saying that:

Many of the best-known *plenas*, from the earliest times on, tell of strikes, working conditions and events of working-class life; they give voice, usually in sharp ironic tones and imagery, to the experience of working people in all its aspects. Topical events, seized upon in all their specificity, take on general, emblematic meaning to Puerto Rican working people of varied stations, places and times because of their shared social world and perspectives. Even the musical features of *plena*, with its boisterous syncopated rhythms, improvised instrumentation and vigorous call-and-response vocal cadences, testify to this working-class base, as becomes clear in the derogatory outrage voiced so often by the cultured elites when reacting to the “primitive” and “vulgar noise” of *plena*.<sup>72</sup>

Concerning salsa, Frances R. Aparicio calls attention to the fact that:

Historically, then, salsa is the music of the immigrant and the urban working class. It is also the music produced mostly by black and mulatto musicians, and this racial definition ties it to the functions of the bomba and the plena in Puerto Rico as much as to the Afro-Cuban forms from which it also derives. As Rubén Blades has commented, “Salsa is urban folklore,” for it constitutes itself as the oral tradition of life in the cities. Its lyrics continue the traditional role of the Puerto Rican plena, the Cuban *son*, the Colombian *vallenato*, and the Mexican *corrido*—the role of narrating historical events, local situations, and stories from the point of view of the marginalized. Salsa songs of the 1970s and 1980s documented the social infrahistory of Latinas/os in the United States and of the poor urban sectors in the Caribbean and throughout Latin America. It is not surprising, then, to find a wide array of themes and issues in salsa, a diversity that

<sup>72</sup> Juan Flores, “Bumbum and the Beginnings of La Plena,” in *Salsiology: Afro-Cuban Music and the Evolution of Salsa in New York City*, ed. Vernon W. Boggs (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1992), 65.

helps ensure its vitality...songs either address race, gender, and class conflicts or reaffirm cultural practices usually marginalized, such as santería and other African-based traditions ...<sup>73</sup>

In fact, two compositions by Ortiz evoke the names of *Santería* divinities, called *orichas*. In *Plena-Merengue*, the players sing in unison a plea, “save us,” to the father of the *orichas*: *Obatalá*.

**EXAMPLE 16** (*Plena-Merengue*, mm. 115-122)

The image shows a musical score for Example 16, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system on the left is for vocalists, with the instruction "all musicians sing:" above it. It features a vocal line with the lyrics "O - ba - ta - lá" and a piano accompaniment line with the instruction "(sing and play)". The second system on the right is for piano accompaniment, with the lyrics "Sal - va - nos" written above the staff. The piano part includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 2/4 time signature. The score is written in a handwritten style with various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

The names of other *santería* divinities are also sung in the percussion quartet *Bembé*. The unison chorus, some vocal and instrumental call and response, along with the sound of the drums, shouts, and clapping, make the sound of *Bembé* strikingly similar to the sound of ritual Afro-Cuban music. *Ogún*, the *oricha* of iron and war, *Yemayá*, the *oricha* of the sea and motherhood, *Changó*, the *oricha* of thunder and lightning, and the *batá* drum that is used in *santería* and usually associated with the worship of *Changó*, its owner, all appear as integral parts of the composition.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Frances R. Aparicio, *Listening to Salsa: Gender, Latin Popular Music, and Puerto Rican Cultures* (New England: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 81-2.

<sup>74</sup> Katherine J. Hagedorn, *Divine Utterances: The Performance of Afro-Cuban Santería* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 244-255.

**EXAMPLE 17** (*Bembé*, mm. 57-60)

The image shows a handwritten musical score for four Congas parts. At the top left, there is a tempo marking: a quarter note followed by an equals sign and the fraction 9/6. The score is written on four staves, each labeled 'Congas' on the left. The lyrics are written below the notes: 'o-ba-tá chan-gó' and 'ye-ma-yá chan-gó'. There are dynamic markings 'f' and 'f (ord.)' above the notes. The notation includes various rhythmic symbols such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and accents.

Composer Eduardo Cáceres argues that these social implications are an important trait of Latin American art music as well:

Creo que no podemos olvidar algunas cuestiones básicas dentro de lo que ha sido tradición política en nuestro país y que nos trae de regalo una música que en su origen es revolucionaria y tremendamente contestataria. Si embargo, se introduce en Latinoamérica con un ropaje que adquirió en su viaje por el Atlántico y que se convirtió en placeres de las clases sociales que mantienen aún el poder económico.

[I believe that we should not doubt some basic questions surrounding political tradition in our countries and that consequently results in a music that in its origin is revolutionary and tremendously contestant. Nevertheless, it introduces itself in Latin America in disguised form but in certain places it has been converted as a novelty for the social classes that still maintain economic power].<sup>75</sup>

Likewise, Ortiz' music evokes the barrio and ghetto life, the Newyorican experience and identity, and even Afro-Caribbean religions as seen above. That can be clearly seen in his composition titles, in the vocalized graffiti in several compositions, but especially in the lyrics by Newyorican poets of *Ghetto* and *124 E. 107 St.*, two dramatic pieces with fierce social criticism.

<sup>75</sup> Eduardo Cáceres, "Música e identidad: La situación latinoamericana," *Revista Musical Chilena* 55, no. 196 (July-December 2001): 83.

**EXAMPLE 18** (*Ghetto* lyrics by Miguel Algarin, Americo Casiano, Victor Hernandez

Cruz, Tato Laviera, Amina Munõz, and Miguel Piñero)

Ke sha—Come home to the East side, South side, West side

Sit in my sixty-seven cadillac with my John's bargain store shirt,  
bubble gum sticking to your frizzies, and barefeet smelling of *bacalao*  
Little Anthony and Tito Puente sing through black sweat: *aquí viene* the *coquito*  
man *aquí viene* superman, who does the *cha-cha-cha* and lives in the white house  
Broken bottles in the street shine like diamonds at our feet, beer smells, wine  
smells, rum smells cover the night like lace at a first communion  
An imported tropical breeze goes up your nose disguised as a sudden whiff of  
Florida water  
A giant cockroach is saying his bed time rosaries but *los jíbaros de la calle* keep  
on hanging out of a four door metal spaceship temporarily grounded on east a  
hundred and twelve street—Ke sha

*Aquí* land of tall cylinders, glass between cement shining, land of forgotten  
tongues that surface time to time  
Once on the Lexington Avenue, local moving into a hundred third street, we meet  
Caquax sitting, waiting for the express  
We turn to say hello but he has gone into the wall Bronx of walking streets that  
turn into large strong eagles  
The astronauts dance *la plena*, they dance until dawn and fly all day walking  
down Bronx Avenues in red high yellow legs  
Suddenly you forget where you are—*Suena* —In the news that sails through the  
air, like the shaking seeds of maracas, I find you out—*Suena*—You don't have to  
move here, just stand on the corner, everything will pass you by—*Suena*—like a  
merry-go-round the red bricks will swing past your eyes, th[e]y will melt, so old  
they will move out by themselves—*Suena*—I present you the tall skyscrapers, as  
merely huge palm trees with lights—*Suena*—the roaring of the trains is a fast  
*guaguancó*, dance of the ages—*Suena*—snow falls, coconut chips galore—*Suena*

*Pito que pita yucca que llama salsa que emprende llanto que llora tru cu tu pa cu*  
*tu, tru cu tu pa cu tu, tru cu tu pa cu tu, tru cu tu pa cu tu pa pa pa pa pa*  
*pa—conguero, sonero—*and the parks, those ghetto parks the living room kitchen  
of many desperate souls, *tumbao* movements street gutted salsa—*conguero,*  
*sonero—espíritu coroso llamamba quimbembé, sin bajo, un hueco en el*  
*corazón—conguero, sonero—*you bite frustrated wine twisted definitions and the  
winos find employment for their wretched lives reminiscing on the women that  
left them, because they couldn't take it anymore—*conguero, sonero—*cowbells  
from empty wine bottles empty congas cemented hands, all these sounds about  
words around faces coming from Tito, *hermano mío, coño!* nodding on the  
streets, like un *tumbao tru cu tu pa cu tu, tru cu tu pa cu tu, tru cu tu pa cu tu, tru*

*cu tu pa cu tu pa pa pa pa pa pa pa pito que pita yucca que llama salsa que  
emprende llanto que llora*

Maguayo home of *el jibaro puertorriqueño*, your conscience, the smell of your smartness is molded, born, grown, nourished in the streets of New York  
My *Nuyorican* being, my eagle knife caution filled mind reads your neon signs:  
*aqui* your *credito es* good, the story of your factory slaving police intimidated working class, each step enacts the workday sexual torture of the slums and your beautiful boys without Christian parents to sustain them in false virtue  
The tortured electronic sound of black America becomes apple pie cheddar cheese wisdom to my eyes, Malo do you see? that that's the position your factory slave forefathers have held as they've worked the machinery of the city spin into hysteria dance the working class roots of your muscles into telling the humiliation of your people through motion—Ke sha—dance and torture the air writhe your body into despair into the joy of dancing out our pain your pain as well  
Maguayo, *campo terrestre, de* Puerto Rico, your children speak an English-Spanish mixed salad, the vulgar language of the spirit that is to be  
I'll tell you something more *Borinquen* as I sat all *ñagotao* there in Maguayo as I let my intestines have free flow and as my constipation won I realized I was just as afraid in *Borinquen* as I am in New York

Sat in the park on a hundred six street, between west end avenue and broadway, the sun opened its zipper, peed over tenements  
Intellectual eight year olds create Vietnams over ground balls  
Violence! that's all they think of  
Had diarrhea in wall-less run-down bathrooms abandoned by anglo-saxon landlords coming in different colors was condensed enough to be evaporated in containers to be sold in A&P food stores with strange eyes beaming at still drawings that come to life in midnight hours looking for a new trick to hang out in west end bars of solitude to deposit litter on the floors of empty apartments floating on rockaway waves in midtown office congestion, the sky became clear with mucus on the lips of colonial imposition  
*y un negro* committed suicide choking with paranoia—ooh, ooh, ooh

Just once before I die I want to climb up on a tenement sky to dream my lungs out till I cry, then scatter my ashes through the Lower East Side, so let me sing my song tonight, let me feel out of sight and let all eyes be dry when they scatter my ashes through the Lower East Side from Houston to fourteenth street from second Avenue to the mighty D, here the hustlers and the suckers meet the faggots, and the freaks will all get high on the ashes that have been scattered thru the Lower East Side, there's no other place for me to be, there's no other place that I can see, there's no other town around that brings you up or keeps you down, no food little heat sweeps by fancy cars and pimps bars and juke saloons and greasy spoons make my spirit fly with my ashes scattered thru the Lower East Side  
A thief a junkie I've been committed ev'ry known sin Jews and Gentiles Bumps and men of style runaway child police shooting wild mother's futile wails pushers

making sales dope wheelers cocaine dealers smoking pot street are hot and feed off those who bleed to death all that's true but this is no lie when I ask that my ashes be scattered thru the Lower East Side, Lower East Side, Lower East Side—ooh, ooh—reflections on dirty windowpanes, lookin' thru eyes that see souls drownin' in the slumray of the city and silk satin latin hands beat underground sounds that vibrate feverishly off pulsing thrummin' tan hog burnt skin mirror back to us the reflections on dirty windowpanes and city dreams all those soft strum songs that seep out of welfare dress apartments becuz this town is high on latin roots, those sweet smellin' songs of displaced smiles and the hearts that have skipped the beat—ooh, ooh, ooh

The vocal delivery is quite challenging requiring the singer to recite, sing not only in the ordinary manner but also in falsetto and *Sprechstimme*, narrate and act, imitate vocally the sound of a beat box (Ke sha), and play clave. The importance of salsa music and percussion in these poems demonstrates their cultural significance not only to these Newyorican writers but also their readers and William Ortiz.

Other than *Ghetto* and *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, which require a singer, three other works require a substantial use of the voice by the percussionist and other instrumentalists. In *Graffiti Nuyorican*, both the percussionist and pianist are required to sing and recite. Ortiz explains that the text used derives from various sources: “street calls, written graffiti on walls, excerpts from the writings of Nuyorican poets and salsa recordings.”

He goes on to explain the meaning of each excerpt:

- “*It's on the roof 100 proof*” – refers to the practice of alcohol consumption on the roof of tenement buildings in the city. A line taken from a recording by the Joe Cuba Sextet dating from the 1960's.
- “*It's in my sneaker a bag of reefer*” – “reefer” was another name for marihuana in the 50's and 60's, especially among jazz musicians. Also taken from the Joe Cuba Sextet.
- “*el aguacero*” – literally “a heavy tropical rain fall.”
- “*The day the Lords and the Jesters jitterbugged down*” – The title of a Miguel Piñero poem. The Lords and Jesters were rival street gangs in New York City.

- *“Even Beethoven can’t keep up to my Latino reality”*—An exclamation of Latin pride.
- *“La Bodega sold Dreams”* – Also by Miguel Piñero. Bodega refers to a grocery store. It is used here as a metaphor relating to the economically deprived.
- *“Ain’t no snitch la coca is a bitch”* – Another excerpt from Miguel Piñero. “Coca” is cocaine. This exposes the drug subculture of the “barrio.”<sup>76</sup>

It is possible to suggest that these social implications in Ortiz’ compositions resonate with his Puerto Rican, Latin American identity and that Ortiz feels his music is somewhat discriminated for being different. When asked if popular music has a place in the curriculum of art music institutions Ortiz replied by saying that:

It seems to me that the segregation of music, as many musical institutions practice it reveals one of the prejudices hidden in our society. Such divisions as “Classical” and “Popular,” “Serious” and “Light,” “High Brow” and “Low Brow” are meaningless labels. Quality and talent can manifest themselves in all areas. So yes, popular music does have a place in academia, as long as it is studied and taught in an integrated manner, not separate from the classical tradition but ancillary to it, enriching it and thus making the “classical” relevant to our present day multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-national global melting pot.<sup>77</sup>

Ortiz’s percussion music clearly feeds off from traditional sources, which are largely ignored in academic performance settings. Additionally, Ortiz knows that being a Third-World, Latin American composer means, among other things, not being able to compete in the European and North American music economy and performance venues. He says that “we are looked upon as something exotic, or some kind of novelty. But then again, that could also be an attraction. In general, we are mostly underestimated because of our

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<sup>76</sup> Ortiz, interview, 26 March 2005.

<sup>77</sup> William Ortiz, interview by author, 13 March 2005, Norman, electronic mail correspondence, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

powerlessness.”<sup>78</sup> That social stance is reflected in the vocalized graffiti of *Eco Para un Grito Gris*, which translates as “marginalized music.”

**EXAMPLE 19** (*Eco Para un Grito Gris*, mm. 111-112)



Uruguayan composer Coriún Aharonián expands on this problematic cultural hierarchy established by European institutions:

América no está habilitada hasta hoy por la todavía arrogante Europa para generar modelos musicales cultos, los abridores de caminos, los vanguardizadores... Es que la música mestiza generada en el lugar latinoamericano quedará generalmente enfrentada al modelo que le es impuesto mecánicamente desde el centro conquistador-colonizador, sin diálogo posible. Y esto desde el comienzo de la conquista. Cuando el modelo se aculture—o el compositor se desprenda algo del modelo europeo—ya habrá llegado, también generalmente, un nuevo modelo que hará obsoleto al anterior y a su contrapartida local... Los centros de poder europeos estarán siempre alertas para la “importación” de recursos de lenguaje—la “material prima” del sistema industrial en su versión cultural—con el fin de renovar sus propias propuestas y mantenerlas atractivas y con fuerza de penetración. Desde la segunda guerra mundial, los centros de poder estadounidenses se sumarán a esta estrategia con el fin de disputar el dominio del mundo, aunque en principio lo harán solo en el terreno de la música popular, con excepciones no oficiales en el terreno de lo culto.

[Until today, the Americas are not capable, according to the arrogance of Europe, to generate art music models, those opening new paths, vanguard paths... It is because the syncretic music created in Latin America has to face the model automatically imposed by the conqueror-colonizer center, without any possibility for dialogue. And that has been happening since the beginning of the conquest. When this model is acculturated—or if a composer exhibits something different from the European model—there will be already, generally speaking, a new model to make it obsolete and its local counterparts... The European centers of power will always be in the alert in order to “import” these resources of language—the cultural version of “raw material” in industrial systems—in order to renew its own ideas and make them continually attractive and with marketing

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

power. Since World War II, the centers of power in the United States adhered to this strategy in order to dispute world power, but in the beginning they were only able to do it in the field of popular music, with unofficial exceptions in the field of art music.]<sup>79</sup>

In addition to aspects of instrumentation, performance practice, and social commentary in Ortiz' music; the use of expressive markings in Spanish and English can also reveal unique information about the relevance of Latin American terms in the performance and aesthetics of his music.

For example, the term *descarga* used in *Graffiti Nuyorican*, *Bembé*, and *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, refers to a jamming session; traditionally, a very energetic improvisatory style not only important in salsa music but also in other Caribbean genres. According to author Frances R. Aparicio:

The perceptions that many cultural outsiders have of this type of music—that it is primitive, loud, chaotic, and subversive—constitute historical repetitions of the same vestigial fears expressed by the Spanish colonial government about the performance on drums by African slaves in Cuba, also evidenced in the banning of the merengue in Puerto Rico in the first half of the twentieth century. Thus, jamming sessions in urban centers around the Americas concretized spaces of opposition and counterculture, simultaneously connecting contemporary Latinas/os and African Americans to the liberatory practices of their slave antecedents and to the cimarrones's state of mind, a maroon conscience about their own contradictory freedom and bondage found in marginality.<sup>80</sup>

*Plena-Merengue* is marked *with swing*, but this is not referring to the triplet-based interpretation of the notation; instead, it refers to playing with a “distinctive approach to rhythm.” Peter Manuel explains that Latin improvisation and composition have “a fondness for stressing offbeats, and especially anacrusis” and “a particular approach to

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<sup>79</sup> Coriún Aharonián, “Factores de identidad musical latinoamericana tras cinco siglos de conquista, dominación y mestizaje,” *Latin American Music Review* 15, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 1994): 201-203.

<sup>80</sup> Aparicio. *Listening to Salsa*, 83-4.

syncopation, involving the...use of [cross-rhythms] binary subdivision with ternary phrasing, and conversely, triplet subdivision with binary phrasing.”<sup>81</sup>

The same is true when the following markings appear in *124 E. 107 St.: con sabor tropical* (meaning literally to improvise “with tropical taste”), *con sabor*, and *con mucho sabor*. These terms mean more appropriately to play with groove, passion, or a great understanding of style.

The marking for *Street Music* is *rústico* (rustic), which is almost inevitable since the parts are stripped of all prettiness and the highly syncopated rhythms give a certain raw, aggressive quality to the music.

*La Clave Bien Temperada* is to be performed *afincao*, referring to a solid tempo and rhythmic integrity. Marisol Berríos-Miranda explains about the importance of terms like this to describe the quality of rhythmic ensemble desirable in salsa music performance.

*Afinque, guataca, trancao, apretao, sólido, pa'lante, mantecoso, camión*, for example, are some ways to describe good-sounding salsa. Of these terms, in Venezuela as well as in Puerto Rico, “afinque” is the most important, meaning everything in the band is “locked” to perfection. Rhythmic thinking is crucial for everyone, because both melodic and percussion instruments are approached like drums. So when musicians complain that the music is not *afincao* it means that if the rhythms are not locked together the music is not happening. The quality of the rhythmic ensemble, which ultimately involves everyone in the ensemble, is of utmost importance.<sup>82</sup>

William Ortiz seems to require from his performers, in almost all of his percussion music, this rhythmic prowess described by Berríos-Miranda.

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<sup>81</sup> Peter Manuel, “Improvisation in Latin Dance Music: History and Style,” in *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, ed. Bruno Nettl and Melinda Russell (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 143-144.

<sup>82</sup> Berríos-Miranda, “Is Salsa a Musical Genre?,” 33.

*Rapeo* has a *tempo de marcha*, which is both a symbolic marking, because the piece is for solo snare drum, but also related to the rhythmic skill necessary in performing snare drum music. Likewise, the expressive marking in *Urbanización* reads “with industrious vigor.” And *Ghetto* has a “beat box” marking perhaps referring to the hip stylistic interpretation expected in performance.

Although these few terms are not used systematically throughout Ortiz’ percussion music, they seem to be implied in most of them because of their interrelatedness, especially with regard to rhythmic quality. In the following section of the document Ortiz’ rhythmic vocabulary will be examined.

## *Rhythm*

The rhythmic nature of Ortiz' music is one of the most distinguishable elements of his style. His handling of rhythm and time is part of a complex network of issues involving musical structure, development, memory, texture, and timbre. But also socio-cultural issues related to his identity as a Latino composer cultivating traditional or traditional-like sounds. It is revealing that when asked if the aesthetics of Latin American concert music are different from those of European and North American music, Ortiz replied by saying:

In general no. Latin American concert music usually follows in the footsteps of European or North American concert music. They are more or less the same. But it is important to point out, according to my perception, that where Latin American music is different aesthetically is in the rhythmic characteristics. I believe Latin American music has or should have a much richer rhythmic palette. I feel that percussion music is the very true soul of Latin American music in all its manifestations, especially in the Caribbean and in Brazil. That is why I have so often turned to percussion.<sup>83</sup>

Ortiz' perception of and interest in the rhythmic uniqueness of Latin American musics indicates at once what is Latin American about his music. This "much richer rhythmic palette," he has pursued in his own music, is the contribution of folkloric and popular musical forms to the concert music of Latin America. Ortiz is aware that the Caribbean and Brazil have rich percussion traditions largely because a considerable number of African slaves from diverse ethnic groups were brought, primarily, from the coast of West and Central Africa during the colonial period to work in the profitable plantations of the New World.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, many traces of African music, especially rhythmic

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<sup>83</sup> Ortiz, interview, 13 March 2005.

<sup>84</sup> Anthony Seeger, "Musical Genres and Contexts," in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Vol. 2: South America, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean*, ed. Dale A. Olsen and Daniel E. Sheehy (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998), 47.

elements, are found in the music of Latin America. Alejo Carpentier was one of the first writers to comment on an important musical cell in the Caribbean: the *cinquillo*. He wrote:

The *cinquillo* is of obvious African origin. It has the rhythmic regularity, the symmetry of certain percussive rituals of voodoo. Its diffusion and persistence can be observed in regions of the Americas where blacks were the majority or a significant part of the population. It accompanied the dance *La resbalosa* in Argentina, when it was still a dance of 'blacks and zambos.' It is a fundamental rhythm in Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico. It is the basis for the Haitian *meringue*. The peculiar placement of the two eighth notes on either side of the bar of a measure is found in the *rada* percussion of Haiti, and even appears in some of the *batá* rhythms of Cuba. To sum up, its inter-American migration follows that of all African-based dances performed throughout the continent.<sup>85</sup>

Carpentier is not the only one to suggest these African derived rhythms have been extremely influential not only in the Caribbean but in Latin America in general. Rolando Antonio Pérez Fernández writes:

Entre los rasgos musicales con que los africanos han contribuido a la formación de la música Americana, y en particular a la de América Latina, el ritmo posee una especial importancia. Este es un hecho que, por ser obvio, no necesita ser destacado; pero lo que no ha resultado tan evidente es que la presencia de características rítmicas africanas en América Latina no se limita a las regiones de mayor importación de esclavos negros, sino que en mayor o menor medida, dichas características son palpables en un ámbito geográfico que casi coincide con la extensión total del continente latinoamericano.

[Among the musical characteristics Africans contributed to the formation of American music, particularly of Latin American music, rhythm is especially important. This is a fact that, being so obvious, does not need much explanation; but what is not as evident is that these African musical characteristics in Latin America are not limited to the regions that imported the greatest number of black slaves but, to a great or less extent, these characteristics are palpable in geographical locations that coincide almost completely with the entire Latin American continent].<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Alejo Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, Cultural Studies of the Americas Vol. 5, ed. Timothy Brennan, trans. Alan West-Durán (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 148-149.

<sup>86</sup> Rolando Antonio Pérez Fernández, *La Binarización de Los Ritmos Ternarios Africanos en América Latina* (Habana, Cuba: Ediciones Casa de las Américas, 1986), 7-8.

More recent scholarship suggests that “Formulas that define Caribbean music as a complex mixture of African and European elements often underestimate the importance of another level of fusion: the interaction of inter-island migrants.”<sup>87</sup> Author Sara E. Johnson stresses the importance of the Haitian Revolution and Haiti as a pioneer center in the construction of Caribbean cultural unity. She says:

“...it was not only the elite who were in dialogue with their contemporaries in other islands. Contact between a mobile class of free blacks and slaves gives some indication of the vast scope of inter-island interactions that were occurring at any given time outside of elite circles.”<sup>88</sup>

Johnson proposes the existence of artistic unity not just with regard to rhythm but in eight basic elements found throughout the Caribbean: costumes, choreography, musical instruments, performance techniques, timbre, rhythm, Creole song lyrics, and the “nomenclature for the instruments and dances themselves.”<sup>89</sup> Johnson states that “Elements of this aesthetic were documented as early as the seventeenth century, and this chapter [*Cinquillo* Consciousness: The Formation of a Pan-Caribbean Musical Aesthetic] is a contribution to a long tradition of musical scholarship....”<sup>90</sup> She concludes by saying that “the very existence of similar musical methodologies indicates the incredibly rich comparative work that remains to be done on inter-island parallels.”<sup>91</sup> One could extend that to the rest of Latin America, as suggested by Fernandez’ argument, and even parts of North America where significant Latin American contingencies are found. Ortiz’

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<sup>87</sup> Sara E. Johnson, “*Cinquillo* Consciousness: The Formation of a Pan-Caribbean Musical Aesthetic,” in *Music, Writing, and Cultural Unity in the Caribbean*, ed. Timothy J. Reiss (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc., 2005), 42.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

rhythmic vocabulary is part of this rich tradition still at the early stages of study by the academia.

The eminent Cuban author Fernando Ortiz has contributed with important information regarding some of these rhythms. He outlined in his book, *La Africanía de la Música Folklórica de Cuba*, seven basic rhythmic cells that are commonly found in Afro-Cuban music. Alternative notations or variations of a cell are given for the first three. Cells six and seven are two-bars long. Cell number one is the *tresillo*, cell number three is the *cinquillo*, and cell number six is the *clave*.<sup>92</sup>

**EXAMPLE 20** (Seven Afro-Cuban Cells)

The image displays seven musical staves, labeled I through VII, each representing a different rhythmic cell. Staves I through VI are in 2/4 time, while staff VII is in 3/4 time. Each staff shows a sequence of notes and rests over two measures. Staff I (tresillo) consists of a quarter note, an eighth note, and a sixteenth note. Staff II shows a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. Staff III (cinquillo) features a quarter note, an eighth note, and a sixteenth note, with a final eighth note and sixteenth note pair. Staff IV includes accents (>) under the first, third, and fifth notes. Staff V shows a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. Staff VI (clave) consists of a quarter note, an eighth note, and a sixteenth note. Staff VII (3/4 time) shows a quarter note, an eighth note, and a sixteenth note.

These rhythmic cells and others can be found and are very often prominent motives in Ortiz' compositions for percussion. It reinforces the idea that his percussion music has

<sup>92</sup> Fernando Ortiz, *La Africanía de la Música Folklórica de Cuba* (Habana, Cuba: Publicaciones del Ministerio de Educación, 1950; reprint, Madrid, Spain: Editorial Música Mundana Maqueda. S.L., 1998), 164-5 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

been greatly influenced by Cuban and other Caribbean musical genres such as *rumba*, *son montuno*, *santería toques*, *merengue*, *bomba*, and *plena*. It also shows how important these styles have been in the development of salsa since Ortiz seems to have learned about this rich repertoire by being involved in popular music. He expands on his popular music background: “One of my early musical experiences was singing ‘Du-Wop’ harmony on city street corners. Later on I organized, played guitar and sang in a Rock band. In Puerto Rico, I played piano in Salsa groups and bands.”<sup>93</sup>

In the following discussion of rhythm in William Ortiz’ music, it is important to note the influence of salsa and popular music and to keep in mind that many of these rhythmic patterns and techniques are commonly found in the traditional music of Latin America, especially in Afro-Latin American genres.

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<sup>93</sup> Ortiz, interview, 13 March 2005.

### A- Syncopation

The use of syncopated rhythms abounds in the percussion music of Ortiz. These “hot” rhythms and patterns are one of the main features in the traditional music and dance of Latin America and they create a particular rhythmic vitality unique to this region of the world. Ortiz states that “it is the rhythmic soul behind the music, quite different from the worn out Eurocentric tradition, that best defines a common denominator in Latin American music.”<sup>94</sup> A few examples suffice to show the importance of such rhythmic inflections in his music. In *Street Music*, for example, the main musical idea is incessant syncopated patterns and cross-rhythms that destroy almost completely the underlying metric organization.

#### EXAMPLE 21 (*Street Music*, mm. 29-32)



The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. The middle staff is a bass clef. The bottom staff is a bass clef. The music consists of rhythmic patterns with many syncopated notes. There are dynamic markings: 'f' (forte) in the middle and bottom staves. A '2/4' time signature is written above the top staff on the right side. The score ends with a double bar line and a 'ff' (fortissimo) marking.

While the notation is quite simple, the effect is a complex interaction between a symmetrical background (4/4 meter) and an asymmetrical foreground where independent time frames (the implied meters: 3/16, 4/16, and 6/16) create a polyrhythmic texture. This temporal tension between background and foreground is made quite obvious in

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

*Rapeo* because the right hand (above the line) plays syncopated figures while the left hand (below the line) marks the steady pulses.

**EXAMPLE 22** (*Rapeo*, mm. 51-58)

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction "(wirebrushes)". It contains a series of syncopated eighth-note patterns. The bottom staff continues these patterns, marked with an *accel.* (accelerando) instruction and a tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 106$ . A wedge-shaped dynamic marking is present at the end of the bottom staff, indicating a crescendo.

These syncopated patterns can sound very different depending on the context and the manner of orchestration. For instance, in this passage of *Street Music* the vibraphone (bottom part) plays the syncopated part. What seems at first cross-rhythms becomes irregular syncopated patterns that sound improvised.

**EXAMPLE 23** (*Street Music*, mm. 60-63)

The image shows three staves of musical notation. The top staff has a tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 100$  and a forte (*f*) dynamic. The middle staff has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The bottom staff has a forte (*f*) dynamic. All three staves feature unison syncopated eighth-note patterns.

Later on in the piece, the unison syncopations create a powerful sonority with strong rhythmic movement and drive; they sound more like a rhythm “break” than improvised.

**EXAMPLE 24** (*Street Music*, mm. 151-155)

A musical score for Example 24, consisting of five staves. The notation is dense, featuring many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together. There are several dynamic markings: 'pp' (pianissimo) appears on the first, second, and fourth staves. A 'pp (subito)' marking is on the third staff. The score shows a complex rhythmic structure with many rests and syncopated patterns.

There are many examples of such breaks in Ortiz' percussion music, not only in the context of chamber music but also in the compositions for solo instruments. Author Marisol Berríos-Miranda explains the importance of breaks in salsa:

Rhythmic unison and punch, and a dramatic interruption of the groove creates a heightened sense of excitement for the dancer and listener. Since most breaks involve short and continued rhythmic units separated by very short silences it is very important to have everybody sounding in sync...breaks give one that sense of the time stopping for one second and then returning with all its force...When these breaks happen, the concept of flowing with the music has to be perfectly ingrained in the musicians, for they all have to begin and stop at the same time and in a split second. This is why to play challenging breaks effectively is a measure of a band's musicianship...Breaks are a great musical tool for building tension, climax, and release.<sup>95</sup>

Ortiz uses these breaks exactly as described by Berríos-Miranda and they are especially helpful as cadential points in compositions where rhythm and timbre are of paramount importance.

Syncopated figures not only affect the fast dance-like sections of compositions but also the inflection of slower music such as in *Graffiti Nuyorican*. Example twenty-three shows the beginning measures of the piece. The entrance by the percussionist prepares for the strong downbeat of the second measure. The second cluster-chord the pianist plays could be placed on the downbeat of measure three or the third beat of

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<sup>95</sup> Berríos-Miranda, "Is Salsa a Musical Genre?," 43-44.

measure two, imitating the percussion. Ortiz anticipates the chord creating rhythmic tension, which is enhanced by the sustaining of the chord over the barline. The resulting texture is multidimensional, a music that moves forward but seems to be floating slowly at the same time.

**EXAMPLE 25** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 1-6)

The musical score for Example 25 is titled "I. A LOWER EASTSIDE POEM" with a tempo marking of quarter note = 66. It is divided into two systems. The first system features percussion (Timbales, Bongos, Placas) and piano. The second system features Percussion (Platillo/Caymbal, congas, cencerro\*) and piano. Dynamics range from ppp to mp.

A similar sensation happens in *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*. The contrast between syncopated figures and sustained notes is even more drastic because the rests are to be observed, as much as possible, throughout the composition. As a result, *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines* sounds more dramatic than *Graffiti Nuyorican*.

**EXAMPLE 26** (*Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*, mm. 40-43)

The musical score for Example 26 shows a single staff with piano dynamics (p, pp, mp, p, mp, mp, p) and tempo markings (Trem. ~~~~~).

In the next section of *Graffiti Nuyorican* the texture is drastically different even though syncopated rhythms are as important. There is a dance-like sensuality to the piano writing not only because of the syncopated rhythms but also because of the short-long contrast between eighth-notes and quarter-notes.

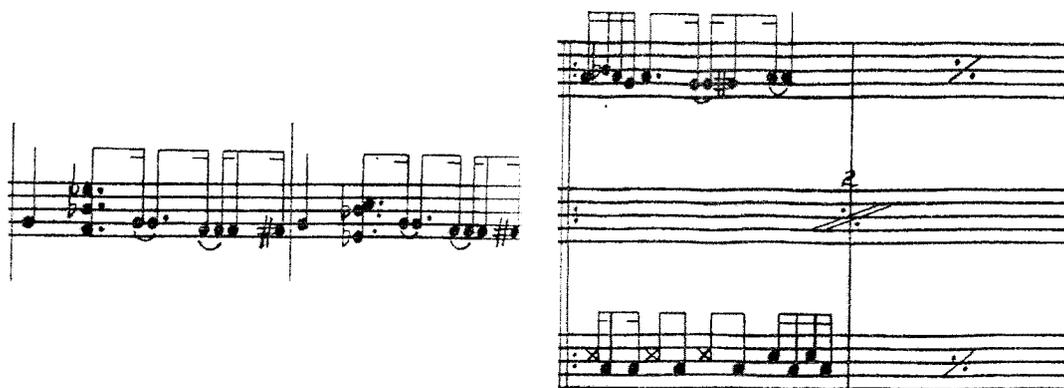
**EXAMPLE 27** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 68-71)

In *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, Ortiz seems to explore to the limits the effect of syncopated figures. In the first five bars of this passage the cymbal has a syncopated figure that is five-measures long. The conga player plays a sustained, rolled note and a syncopated figure with a very strong profile. With a drastic tempo change, a *plena* rhythm is heard softly again by the conga player. The slow tempo returns and a syncopated figure very similar to that at the beginning of *Graffiti Nuyorican* (see Example 25) is heard before the claves and timbales play another syncopation.

**EXAMPLE 28** (*124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, mm. 1-14 of movement four)

Sometimes these syncopations happen in a quasi-traditional context. That can be seen in *Plena-Merengue* where not only the instrumentation but also the figures of each player recall the sound of traditional music. It is interesting to note that Ortiz uses the electric guitar, which could be simply in order to match the volume of the saxophone and percussion but also to attain a unique ensemble color, since the traditional ensembles used some type of acoustic guitar such as the *tres*, *cuatro*, or *tiple*.<sup>96</sup> The saxophone became popular in the twentieth century merengue as a *típico* instrument capable to perform fast and flashy passages in the same range of the accordion, another important merengue instrument.<sup>97</sup> And here, the conga player tries to emulate the sound of the traditional *tambora* drum by playing on the wooden side and the head of the drum to create similar syncopated patterns.

**EXAMPLE 29** (*Plena-Merengue*, mm. 154-157)



In this passage from *Ghetto*, the *cinquillo*-like rhythm and chromatic movement of the vocal line is combined with the *clave* (played by the flutist), an anticipated bass provided

<sup>96</sup> Héctor Vega Drouet, "Puerto Rico," in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Vol. 2: South America, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean*, ed. Dale A. Olsen and Daniel E. Sheehy (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998), 932-941.

<sup>97</sup> Paul Austerlitz, *Merengue: Dominican Music and Dominican Identity* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 32-33.



Scholar Isabelle Leymarie provides in her book a similar pattern, albeit in the minor mode, used in salsa bands referred to as *montuno de guaguancó*.

**EXAMPLE 32** (comparison of *guajeo* and *montuno de guaguancó* melodic patterns)



In this passage of *Del Caserío*, the conga initiates a beautifully syncopated pattern that four bars later is enriched by another anticipated bass part shared by the double bass and the guitar, which is repeated for a few bars.

**EXAMPLE 33** (*Del Caserío*, mm. 73-79)



In this improvisatory section of *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, the congas have a Puerto Rican *bomba* rhythm that is closely related to the *cinquillo*, and the claves play a *cáscara* pattern that is also syncopated but two-bars long. The cowbell marks the downbeats to reinforce the metric structure the bongos and timbales will purposefully avoid in the improvisation.

**EXAMPLE 34** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St., *Bembé* section near the end of the second movement)

bongos improvise ("con mucho sabor")  
 timb. improvise ("con mucho sabor")

These syncopated figures often serve as main motives in several compositions.

For example, in *Loaisai*, both the bass clarinet and the percussion parts have this syncopated motive throughout the composition. It is a fragment of Fernando Ortiz' seventh Afro-Cuban cell, which is two-measures long.

**EXAMPLE 35** (*Loaisai*, mm. 1-3)

WILLIAM OR  
 ♩. = 68 moderato  
 Bb Bass Clarinet  
 Marimba (percussion): Tenor Drum, Snare Drum, Large Cymbal  
 Tenor Drum

In the next example an important motive is *Palm Tree* in *Spanglish Figurines* is shown, which is recalled several times in the composition and serves to unify the eleven-minute solo for timpani. Interestingly enough, the same motive is heard in *Ghetto*, but in the guitar part.

**EXAMPLE 36** (*Palm Tree* in *Spanglish Figurines*, mm. 22-23)

f

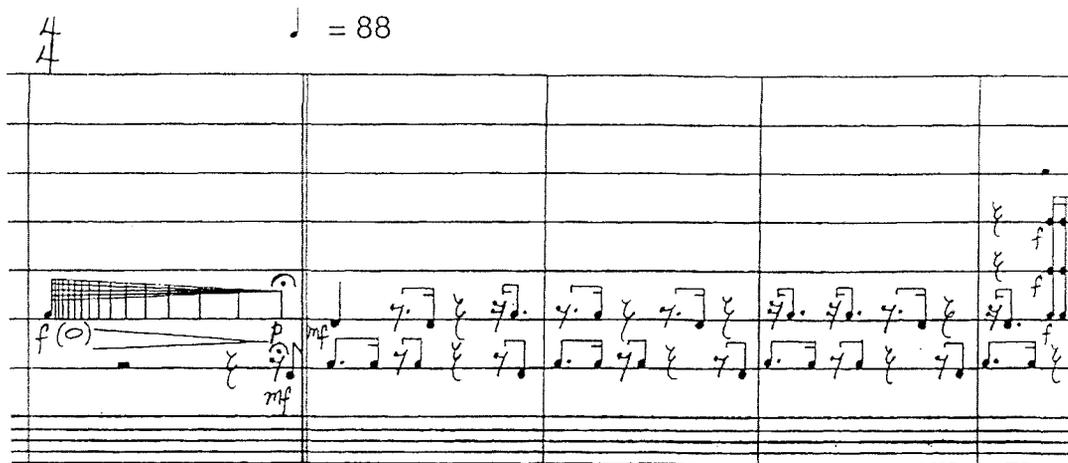
The rhythmic centrality of Ortiz' music is not only seen in the rhythms themselves but also in the repetition of notes, which reinforces that percussive, more physical side of his music. This syncopated motive in *Eco para un Grito Gris* is a good example of that.

**EXAMPLE 37** (*Eco para un Grito Gris*, mm. 14-19)



Very often, these syncopated motives are treated as ostinati in order their thematic profiles can be perceived locally with ease by the listener. That can be seen here in the bottom part, where Ortiz repeats a four-note syncopated pattern on two congas as the bongo part displays a more asymmetric phrase.

**EXAMPLE 38** (*Urbanización*, mm. 22-25)



The following syncopated ostinato is recalled several times in *Bembé* and played by two players. This is the first time it appears in the piece, played by player one.

**EXAMPLE 39** (*Bembé*, mm.134-137)

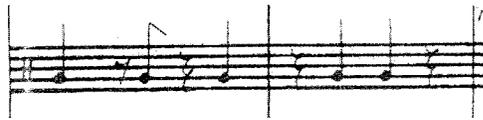
The image shows a musical score for four percussion instruments: Congas, Bongos, Congero, and Timbales. The Congas part is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The Bongos part is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, featuring a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) and a *mp* (mezzo-piano) marking. The Congero and Timbales parts are represented by solid black bars on their respective staves, indicating that they are silent or have a constant rhythm not shown.

There are three very important motives that can be found in many of the percussion compositions by Ortiz. The first is the *clave*, which is extremely important in several Cuban genres and in salsa music. The second is the *cáscara*, which derives also from Cuban genres such as the *rumba* and is a prominent pattern in salsa. The third motive is a ternary one and also shares the characteristics of Afro-Cuban rhythms. They will receive a closer look in the next section of the paper.

### ***B- Clave***

One of the most important rhythmic ideas found in the percussion music of Ortiz is the *clave*. This five-note asymmetric pattern is intrinsic to many Afro-Cuban musical genres and also to salsa. It is traditionally played by the claves, two short and thick wooden sticks that produce a piercing sound when one stick is struck against the other.<sup>99</sup>

#### **EXAMPLE 40 (3-2 Clave)**



The clave rhythm developed from similar West African structural rhythms that served to orient musicians in the performance of complex, polyrhythmic structures.<sup>100</sup> These rhythms, often played on bells, are known as the timeline, which becomes a point of reference to the other musicians.<sup>101</sup> The coordination of parts depends on this relationship with the bell rhythm, which is repeated over and over in a cyclical fashion. The clave rhythm serves a similar purpose in the traditional music of Cuba and in salsa. It can either appear starting on the three side or on the two side. Ortiz almost always uses the three-two clave.

#### **EXAMPLE 41 (2-3 Clave)**



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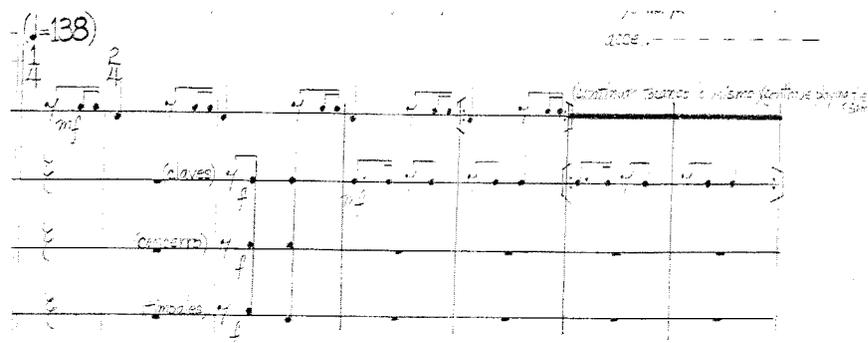
<sup>99</sup> Manuel, *Caribbean Currents*, 38-39.

<sup>100</sup> Sublette, 95.

<sup>101</sup> Ruth M. Stone, *Music in West Africa: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*, Global Music Series (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 81.

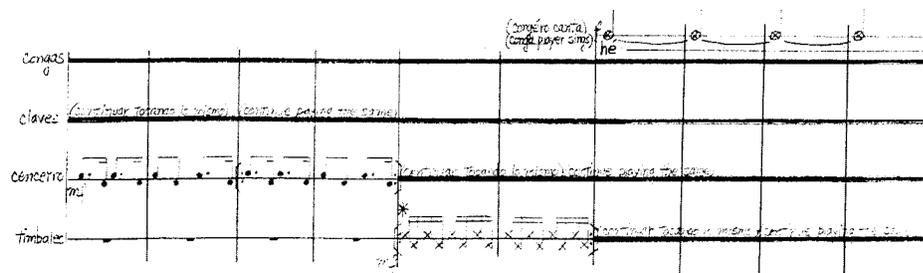
Ortiz has used this clave rhythm in many of his compositions for percussion. In works such as *Bembé* and *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, he has used the clave rhythm in its most traditional form, played on the claves as a structural rhythm and as a point of reference to other musicians. In the example below, the first time the clave is heard in the piece, while the congas initiate the rhythm it is clear that the two-bar phrase organization follows the clave structure. In this case, the two side of the *clave* is used as a “break” before the 3-2 structure is established by the claves.<sup>1</sup>

**EXAMPLE 42** (*Bembé*, mm. 113-119)



In the next few bars the texture is completed with the addition of the *cencerro* (cowbell) and timbales, which is played on its sides. While the cowbell rhythm follows the clave structure, the overall texture has an interlocking style where even though each player has his own part, “when the audience listens they hear the performance as one part.”<sup>102</sup>

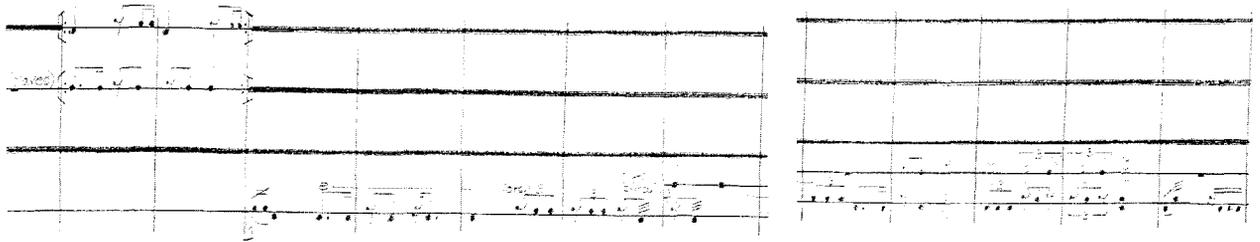
**EXAMPLE 43** (*Bembé*, mm. 120-129)



<sup>102</sup> Stone, 71.

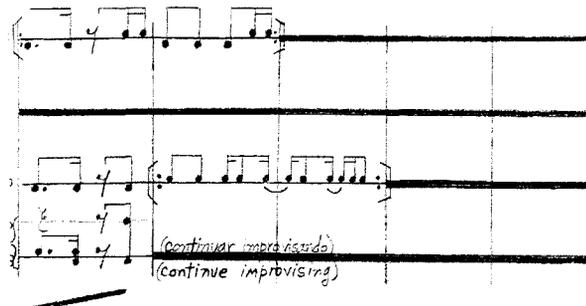
When the timbales come in with a solo in measure 163, Ortiz purposefully avoids following the clave structure and creates larger asymmetric phrases, which gives breadth to the composition.

**EXAMPLE 44** (*Bembé*, mm. 161-172)



The passage above is preceded by player two improvising on bongos. When the claves are reintroduced in measure 161, they are out of sync with the cowbell until measure 173 when the cowbell player changes its pattern midway the two-bar phrase to a *cáscara* pattern. The conga part also changes reinforcing the 3-2 clave structure.

**EXAMPLE 45** (*Bembé*, mm. 173-177)



The clave is especially helpful as a point of reference when the performer has to improvise his own material like in this double solo by congas and timbales near the end of the piece.

**EXAMPLE 46** (*Bembé*, mm. 630-637)

In fact, the *clave* is the backbone in the last section of the piece, which starts with the claves by themselves.

**EXAMPLE 47** (*Bembé*, mm. 547-553)

In the final bars of the composition, the players perform a *crescendo* and end on the three side of the clave as in an unresolved half cadence.

**EXAMPLE 48** (*Bembé*, mm. 696-703)

In other works, however, Ortiz uses the clave rhythm as a motive or as a sonic icon of Latin American music. In his other percussion quartet entitled *La Clave Bien Temperada* for four clave players it is no surprise that the clave rhythm is used. However, this time the clave rhythm is treated simply as a musical motif and not as a structural principle. The introduction of the piece is shown below. The clave 1 part has a fragment of the clave rhythm in measures two and three. The same fragment is embellished slightly with a pick-up note in measures four, five, and six. The full 3-2 clave rhythm appears in measure seven creating an interlocked pattern with the clave 2 part. It is only used in its full form four more times in the piece.

EXAMPLE 49 (*La Clave Bien Temperada*, mm. 1-9)

## La Clave Bien Temperada (The Well-Tempered Clave)

(for 4 pairs of Claves)

(Each player should be separated from one another as far as possible, in order to create a quadraphonic effect)  
(Cada percusionista debe estar alejado del otro lo más posible con el propósito de crear un efecto quadrafónico)

William Ortiz

$\text{♩} = 108$  (*afincao*)

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system consists of four staves labeled Claves 1 through 4. Claves 1 and 2 play a simple quarter note followed by a quarter rest. Claves 3 and 4 play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with dynamics *p* and *mf* indicated. A repeat sign is placed after the first measure of Claves 3 and 4. The second system consists of four staves labeled Clv. 1 through 4. Clv. 1 and 2 play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with dynamics *mp* and *mf* indicated. Clv. 3 and 4 play the same eighth-note pattern as in the first system. A repeat sign is placed after the first measure of Clv. 3 and 4. A fermata is placed over the first measure of Clv. 1 and 2.

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5

Clv. 1

Clv. 2

Clv. 3

Clv. 4

*p* *mf* *p* *mf*

7

Tongue Clicks

Clv. 1

Clv. 2

Clv. 3

Clv. 4

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

In *Graffiti Nuyorican*, the meaning of the clave rhythm seems to be a symbolic representation of the Puerto Rican musical experience. The very brief appearance of this musical gesture is so strong that it immediately triggers the mind to associate it with the salsa music developed by Puerto Ricans in New York.

**EXAMPLE 50** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 28)

The image shows a musical score for Example 50, measures 28. It features three staves: a top staff for 'claves' with a handwritten '(vib)' and an arrow pointing right, a middle staff for a melodic line with a handwritten '15' above it and 'mp' below it, and a bottom staff for a bass line with a handwritten '8' and 'Ped.' below it. The music is in 4/4 time and includes various rhythmic notations and dynamics.

The complete pattern appears only once in the piece but is unforgettable because of its context symbolizing Latino pride.

**EXAMPLE 51** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 88-90)

The image shows a musical score for Example 51, measures 88-90. It features four staves: a top staff for '(perc. speaks)' with a handwritten '(accel.-----rit.-----)' above it and 'f' below it, a second staff for a vocal line with the lyrics 'e-ven Bee-tho-ven can't keep up to my let-t-er-a-ry', a third staff for 'conc.' with a handwritten 'f' above it and 'p' below it, and a bottom staff for 'claves' with a handwritten 'p' below it. The music is in 4/4 time and includes various rhythmic notations, dynamics, and performance instructions.

In other works such as *Del Caserío* and especially in *Ghetto*, these different uses of the clave overlap in different ways. For example, in this passage from *Del Caserío* the

clave plays its traditional pattern while the bass pizzicato reinforces it but as a motive since traditionally the bass would not play the same rhythm as the clave.

Compositionally, it is a unique orchestration of this important figure in the lowest and highest pitched parts.

**EXAMPLE 52** (*Del Caserío*, mm. 62-67)

Musical score for Example 52, measures 62-67 of *Del Caserío*. The score is for a six-piece ensemble: Flute, Sax, Tromb., Guit., Clave, and Bass. The Clave part shows a traditional rhythmic pattern. The Bass part features a pizzicato line that reinforces the clave's rhythm. Dynamics include *mf* and *p*.

Later in the composition the clave appears in diminution creating a nice contrast with the slow moving parts of the rest of the ensemble and challenging the percussionist musically for the part requires rhythmic integrity and a delicate touch.

**EXAMPLE 53** (*Del Caserío*, mm. 147-151)

Musical score for Example 53, measures 147-151 of *Del Caserío*. The score is for a larger ensemble including Trumpet, Sax, Tromb., Flute, Percussion, and Oboe. The Clave part is in diminution. Dynamics include *pp*, *mf*, and *p*.

In *Rapeo*, although the clave appears in only three measures of the composition, those three measures are very memorable not only because they are timbrally distinct (rim shots) but because the Latin American character of the music becomes fully obvious.

**EXAMPLE 54** (*Rapeo*, mm. 35-37)

Musical notation for Example 54, showing a single staff with a tempo of quarter note = 134, 'snare off', and dynamics p(r.s.) and mf. The notation includes a series of rhythmic patterns with stems and flags, and a few notes with stems and flags.

The clave is also an integral part of the *barrio* musical sounds recalled in *Urbanización*. In this excerpt, the percussionist is responsible for three or four layers of music, one of them a bass drum part played with the foot. It is interesting that the congas have the same rhythm as above, which suggests that this is a familiar sound and texture to the composer. The same basic texture also appears in *Bembé* (see Example 42 on page 75).

**EXAMPLE 55** (*Urbanización*, mm. 177-181)

Musical notation for Example 55, showing a multi-staff score for percussion instruments: OB, CYM, SN, T, ED, EGS, CGS, and T.M.P. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns and notes for each instrument.

A section of *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.* featuring the percussionists' informal drumming, appropriately titled *Bembé*, also has the *clave* as the rhythmic organizer of the structure.

Although the conga player starts, his part and that of the *cencerro* (cowbell) are based on the 3-2 *clave*.

**EXAMPLE 56** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St., mm. 1-5 of *Bembé* section in the first movement)

Bembe (♩=112)

The musical score for Example 56 is titled "Bembe" with a tempo of ♩=112. It consists of four staves for percussion instruments: Congas, Claves, Cencerro, and Bongos. The Congas part begins with a 3-2 clave rhythm, marked with a dynamic of *pp*. The Claves part follows with a similar pattern. The Cencerro and Bongos parts are marked with dynamics of *mp*. The score is in 3/4 time and features a 3-2 clave rhythm.

About half of Ortiz' compositions for percussion feature the *clave* either as an icon of Latin American music, as a resourceful rhythmic cell, or as an organizing principle in improvised and polyrhythmic contexts. The *clave* is so pervasive in Ortiz' percussion music that it can be considered a fingerprint of his Latin American style.

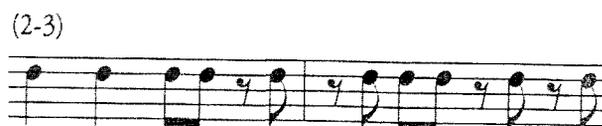
### C- *Cáscara*

Another traditional rhythm Ortiz uses often in his percussion music is the *cáscara*. Its rhythmic structure is intimately connected to the clave rhythm and traditionally played in salsa bands by the timbales player on the shell of the drum, thus the origin of the term *cáscara*; but sometimes also on a mounted cowbell or suspended cymbal, all part of his instrumental set-up. There are several variations of this basic pattern and Ortiz' *cáscara* is slightly different from the most well known pattern.<sup>103</sup> The next three examples include the most common *cáscara* pattern, a variation of that, and finally Ortiz' *cáscara*. They are all in 2-3 *clave*.

#### EXAMPLE 57 (traditional *cáscara*)



#### EXAMPLE 58 (*cáscara* variation)



#### EXAMPLE 59 (Ortiz' *cáscara* in 2-3 *clave*)



<sup>103</sup> Mauleón, 76-77.

In *La Clave Bien Temperada*, Ortiz uses the *cáscara* as a motive. The next example shows the motive used in canonic form, separated one quarter note apart. Player 2 plays the first statement in measure 12 followed by players 3, 4, and 1. In measure 16, the *cáscara* is split between all players.

**EXAMPLE 60** (*La Clave Bien Temperada*, mm. 10-16)

Player 4 in measure 17 plays a fragment of the *cáscara*, the last four notes of the pattern, as an accompaniment ostinato, which is very similar to a traditional *bomba* rhythm.

**EXAMPLE 61** (*La Clave Bien Temperada*, mm. 17-19)

Unlike in *Bembé* and *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, Ortiz uses the *cáscara* always in opposition to the *clave* (i.e., not following the *clave* structure) so that the polyphonic nature of the piece is made more obvious to the listener. The resulting composite rhythm is a tightly constructed interlocked pattern.

**EXAMPLE 62** (*La Clave Bien Temperada*, mm. 44-45)

The score for Example 62 consists of four staves, each representing a clavichord. The time signature is 2/4. Each staff begins with a triplet of eighth notes, marked with a 'p' (piano) dynamic and a crescendo hairpin leading to a 'f' (forte) dynamic. This is followed by a quarter note marked with an 'mf' (mezzo-forte) dynamic. The rhythmic pattern is consistent across all four parts, creating a polyphonic texture.

Ortiz is able to write a polyphonic piece for claves first by making sure each clave is heard clearly as an individual part, thus he requests them to stand as far as possible from each other. He also makes sure that all players have rests in order to maintain the singularity of each part fresh. The imitative writing and *ostinati* also help with the recognition of rhythmic motives. The fact there are several unison passages in the piece adds contrast to the mostly polyphonic texture. The following passage has some of these elements.

**EXAMPLE 63** (*La Clave Bien Temperada*, mm. 46-51)

The score for Example 63 spans measures 46 to 51. It features four staves for clavichords. The music is more complex than in Example 62, with overlapping rhythmic patterns. Dynamics include piano (p), mezzo-piano (mp), and mezzo-forte (mf). The score shows a variety of rhythmic textures, including triplets and sixteenth-note patterns, with some parts having rests.

In *Graffiti Nuyorican*, the *cáscara* first appears at the end of the first section of the piece marked as a *descarga*, which in salsa refers to an improvised jam session. *Descarga* literally means unloading, thus the character of physical work and excitement is made obvious in these fast and rhythmically active sections of the music. The pianist

plays *cáscara* on the cowbell and sings repeatedly a short refrain to energize the improvisation of the percussionist.

**EXAMPLE 64** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 40-42)

Musical score for Example 64, measures 40-42. The score includes staves for conga/bongos, timbales, piano, and percussion. It features a 'descarga' section with a tempo of 120, marked with 'f' and 'p' dynamics, and includes annotations like 'Con. bon.', 'Cencerro', and 'Continue repeating'.

Later, the percussionist is the one that plays *cáscara* at a slow tempo much like the clave was used earlier as a sonic icon of Puerto Rican music. A fragment of the *cáscara* is heard before a full restatement of the pattern, as a motive, is played on bongos and piano between the second and final section of the piece.

**EXAMPLE 65** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 72-74)

Musical score for Example 65, measures 72-74. The score includes staves for percussion (bongo, timbale) and piano. It features a 'descarga' section with a tempo of 120, marked with 'p' dynamics, and includes annotations like 'percusión', 'bongo', 'timb.', and 'Cenc.'

The fast *descarga* section with the *cáscara* rhythm is heard one more time in the final section of the piece.

In *Rapeo*, interesting enough, the *cáscara* is heard right after the clave rhythm reinforcing the idea of musical relationship between these two rhythms, even though the *clave* is in 3-2 while the *cáscara* is in 2-3.

**EXAMPLE 66** (*Rapeo*, mm. 34-41)

After a few bars, the *cáscara* seems to be the goal of this improvisatory-like passage, which includes the full pattern in measure 57 and ends with four more statements, the last one cut short, between measures 61 and 64.

**EXAMPLE 67** (*Rapeo*, mm. 51-58)

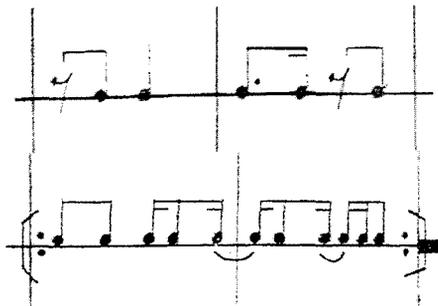
The *cáscara* rhythm is also found intact in *Eco Para un Grito Gris*, although it only appears once without playing a motivic role in this work. It should be noted, however, that it serves as a rhythmic break announcing the first appearance of a dance-like bass part.

**EXAMPLE 68** (*Eco Para un Grito Gris*, mm. 86-88)



Not surprisingly, in *Bembé*, the *cáscara* rhythm is used traditionally, played on the cowbell and reinforcing the 2-3 clave rhythm during a timbales improvisation.

**EXAMPLE 69** (*Bembé*, mm. 174-175)



Much later in the piece, however, a variation of the *cáscara* is played on the claves in measures 475 and 476, which interlocks with the second and third conga parts.

**EXAMPLE 70** (*Bembé*, mm. 471-477)



A similar type of interlocked design is seen in *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> S.*, where the *cáscara* is played by the claves interlocking with the congas and cowbell (*cencerro*). This texture serves as the background for a double improvisation between bongos and timbales.

**EXAMPLE 71** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> S., *Bembé* section near the end of the second movement)

congas  
 claves  
 cenc.  
 timb.  
 tape

15"  
 20"

(narrator) "throughout the vicinity,"  
 ("por el barrio")

"everybody was dancing"  
 ("Todos bailaban")

"elephants participated"  
 ("elefantes participaban")

bongos: improvise ("con mucho sabor")  
 timb.: improvise ("con mucho sabor")

Although in 124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> S. the *cáscara* is never used to support the clave structure, one can still see that they are intimately related. The passage above, for example, is preceded and followed by another passage where the clave plays its own traditional pattern.

**EXAMPLE 72** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> S., *Bembé* section near the end of the second movement)

congas  
 claves  
 cenc.  
 timb.  
 tape

bembe (d=108)

2"

"and for a few seconds"  
 ("y por unos segundos")

At the very end of 124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> S. both the *clave* and the *cáscara* appear, but in opposition to each other and with the *cáscara* being played on a cymbal.

**EXAMPLE 73** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> S., *Bembé* end of the third movement)

congas  
 claves  
 cenc.  
 bongos  
 timb.

2'07"  
 (d=108)  
 2'29"

(narrator slowly walks off stage)

The *cáscara* is also present in *Urbanización* and not only serves as a sonic graffiti but as rhythmic material derived from the vocal graffiti. It is first heard in measure 41 by itself and reinforced by bass drum and timpano before a big *crescendo* leading to the first vocal graffiti.

**EXAMPLE 74** (*Urbanización*, mm. 41-44)

(meno mosso)  
percussionist sings: \*

\* (on any pitch; voice may be amplified)

Near the end of the composition the *cáscara* is fully integrated into the rhythmic vocabulary and is surrounded by similar syncopated patterns.

**EXAMPLE 75** (*Urbanización*, mm. 316-320)

In *Del Caserío*, a variation of the *cáscara* is played on the claves, again showing their interrelatedness.

**EXAMPLE 76** (*Del Caserío*, mm. 94-95)



Another variation of the *cáscara* is also found in *Ghetto*, which also has the *clave* in several places of the composition.

**EXAMPLE 77** (*Ghetto*, mm. 260-262)

A musical score for three parts: voice, piano, and percussion. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 76. The voice part has the lyrics 'Just once before I die'. The piano part includes dynamic markings 'pp', 'mf', and 'mp'. The percussion part includes 'G.C.T.' and 'Timp.' with a dynamic marking 'mf'. The text '(Text: Miguel Piñero)' is written above the voice line.



**EXAMPLE 81** (Piano *montuno* in 6/8)



The Afro-Caribbean motive can be found in Ortiz' *Polifonía Salvaje* where the percussionist establishes an accompaniment pattern on the congas that outlines both the duple and triple time feels Stone speaks of.

**EXAMPLE 82** (*Polifonía Salvaje*, mm. 35-37 of *fugato* section)

The same motive appears in *Rapeo*. Ortiz repeats it a few times in order to distinguish it from the other nine important motives in the composition.

**EXAMPLE 83** (*Rapeo*, mm. 42-45)

In the last section of the piece, the Afro-Caribbean motive is recalled by means of rim shots so that the listener can easily recognize it amongst several of the other motives that are also featured here.

**EXAMPLE 84** (*Rapeo*, mm. 67-74)

In *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*, the motive is given a more flexible, developmental treatment perhaps because the pitch content affords the composer to play with the motive more freely without losing its unifying purpose.

**EXAMPLE 85** (*Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*, mm. 200-225)

Also in *Bembé*, the congas have the Afro-Caribbean motive while the cowbell embellishes it and the timbales mark the two-bar phrase structure. The claves, on the other hand, bring out the polyrhythmic feel (three against two) so important in Afro-Caribbean music every time the congas have three notes in a measure.

**EXAMPLE 86** (*Bembé*, mm. 188-193)

In *Urbanización*, that same polyrhythmic feel is present but in relation to the bass drum part (dotted quarter notes), which divides the 12/8 measure in four equal parts.

**EXAMPLE 87** (*Urbanización*, mm. 290-293)

In an earlier passage, Ortiz creates a beautiful polyphonic effect by the addition of an independent third line, which is almost the same Afro-Caribbean motive played backwards.

**EXAMPLE 88** (*Urbanización*, mm. 240-243)

The fact that similar rhythmic patterns can be found before the Afro-Caribbean motive is introduced, suggests that it is integrated into the rhythmic vocabulary of the composition.

**EXAMPLE 89** (*Urbanización*, mm. 149-155)

While the Afro-Caribbean motive does not appear in its original form in *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, it is clear that Ortiz uses a variation of that pattern instead. Its connection to the text can be easily interpreted as representing the music of all underprivileged Afro-Puerto Rican immigrants, doomed to live in the margins of society. The text reads:

Lá-piz:Pen-cil, Plu-ma:Pen, Co-ci-na:Kit-chen, Ga-lli-na:Hen. Everyone who learns this will receive a high school equivalency diploma, a lifetime supply of employment agencies, a different bill collector for every day of the week, the right to vote for the executioner of your choice.

**EXAMPLE 90** (*124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, middle of the first movement)

In two other instances, the Afro-Caribbean variation appears in the midst of other traditional rhythms. Here, it is played by the bongos.

**EXAMPLE 91** (*124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, end of the third movement)

## E- Dance Rhythms

The rhythms of certain Afro-Caribbean dance genres are also an important aspect of Ortiz' percussion music. These rhythms can appear briefly within a piece, in the form of a "sonoral graffiti," simply suggesting dance music, or they can play a more central role in the overall form of a composition. Ortiz makes an intelligent use of these traditional patterns, which very often are mainly carried by the percussion instruments. In *Plena-Merengue*, for example, Ortiz starts the piece with the percussionist playing on the traditional *pandereta*, a jingle-less tambourine. At first, only part of the traditional pattern is played with the interruption of rests. A few bars later it is completed. Open, low tones mark the downbeats while the high, and muted off beats create a new layer.

### EXAMPLE 92 (*Plena-Merengue*, mm. 1-2 and 9-10)

The image shows two musical staves for a Pandereta part in 4/4 time. The first staff covers measures 1-2 and the second staff covers measures 9-10. The notation includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first staff is labeled 'Pandereta (tamborine, without jingles) (seco) (seco) (simile)' and has dynamic markings 'pp' and 'p'. The second staff has a dynamic marking 'p'.

The traditional *plena* drum ensemble has at least two or more different sized drums with each drummer playing a different pattern in order to enrich the rhythmic texture.<sup>107</sup>

Because Ortiz' composition only uses one drummer, he continues the pattern on two congas, which changes the color of the part but also gives the impression of a second or third player being added to the ensemble because now there are two open tones and a syncopation that is characteristic in the improvisation on the highest pitched drum.

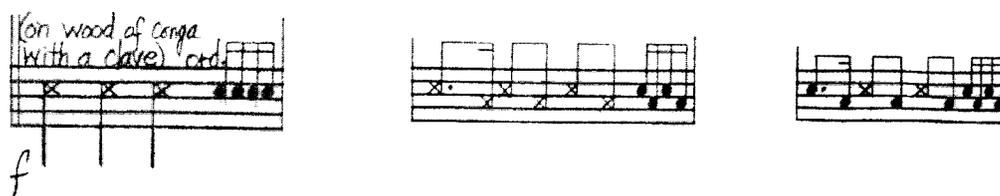
<sup>107</sup> J. Emanuel Dufrasne González, *Puerto Rico también tiene... ¡tambó!: Recopilación de Artículos Sobre la Plena y la Bomba* (Río Grande, Puerto Rico: Paracumbé, 1994), 24.

**EXAMPLE 93** (*Plena-Merengue*, m. 15 )



In next section, *merengue* rhythms are developed by the percussionist, who simulates the sound of the traditional *tambora* used in *merengue* music by using a clave striking the head and the side of the conga drum (marked with an X).

**EXAMPLE 94** (*Plena-Merengue*, mm. 34, 46, and 54)



Ortiz's *merengue* patterns resemble closely the rhythmic structure of the traditional Dominican pattern, particularly the “roll” on the fourth beat of each measure. *Merengue* scholar Paul Austerlitz shows this fairly complex, colorful pattern.<sup>108</sup>

**EXAMPLE 95** (Basic *tambora* pattern)

- \*Tambora Key:
- 1 { e right hand (stick) open tone
  - left hand open tone
  - 2 x right hand (stick) run hit
  - 3 x left hand bass slap



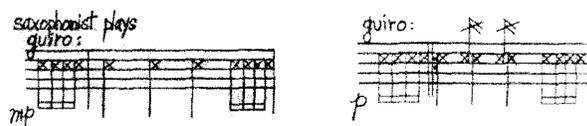
The *plena* rhythm comes back and once again is followed by the *merengue* with the addition of a guiro part, usually played in the Dominican Republic by a metal version of the instrument called *güira*,<sup>109</sup> being played by the saxophonist. The second time the

<sup>108</sup> Austerlitz, 57.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

guiro is used, at the very end of the composition, Ortiz writes grace notes as variations of the basic *güira* pattern.

**EXAMPLE 96** (*Plena-Merengue*, m. 187-190)



Ed Uribe notates a basic pattern of the *merengue güira* and very wisely reminds the reader that “the actual nuance and all the variations played are impossible to notate.”<sup>110</sup>

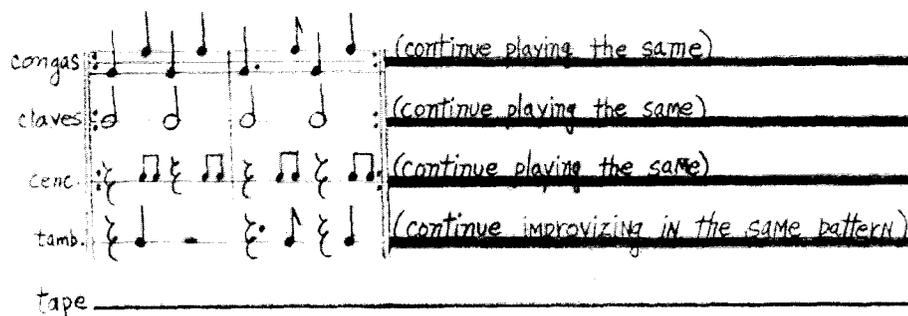
Ortiz seems to address that by choosing grace notes over exact sixteenth notes.

**EXAMPLE 97** (*Güira* basic pattern in cut time)



The *plena* is also featured extensively in the beginning of *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*. Ortiz does not use an ensemble of *panderetas* but again assigns multiple parts to be simulated by one conga player. He does have one percussionist playing a *pandereta* improvisation (marked as “tambourine”), which he writes out at first but lets the player finish it.

**EXAMPLE 98** (*124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, mm. 31-32 of *plena* section in the first movement)



<sup>110</sup> Ed Uribe, *The Essence of Afro-Cuban Percussion and Drum Set* (Miami: Warner Bros. Publications, 1996), 138.

Later, a *rumba* rhythm is performed twice by the ensemble for a rather long time. One conga player outlines the main rhythm on three drums. Traditionally, three players are assigned to three different-sized *tumbadoras*, how they are referred to in Cuba. The two lowest pitched drums, the *salidor* and the *tres golpes*, are the ones that have the hocket pattern Ortiz outlines, which is called *tumbao*.<sup>111</sup> The highest drum, called *quinto*, is the solo-improvising drum. This role is assigned to the bongos in *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, but Ortiz this time writes out the complete solo the first time the *rumba* is heard.

**EXAMPLE 99** (*124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, mm. 1-7 of *bembé* section in the first movement)

The image shows a musical score for a section titled "Bembe" with a tempo marking of ♩ = 112. The score is written for four parts: congas, claves, cenc., and bongos. The congas part has a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The claves part is a simple pattern of quarter notes. The cenc. part is a simple pattern of quarter notes. The bongos part is a simple pattern of quarter notes. The score is in 4/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns for the percussion instruments.

Uribe provides the separate traditional drum parts and the *clave* timeline, which is slightly different from Ortiz' and does not agree with the three notes of the *tumbao*.<sup>112</sup> This indicates that in salsa the relationship between the *clave* and the drums is different than in a traditional context.

**EXAMPLE 100** (*Rumba* ensemble parts)

The image shows a diagram of Rumba ensemble parts. It includes four parts: Clave, Salidor, Tres Golpes, and Quinto. The Clave part is a simple pattern of quarter notes. The Salidor part is a complex rhythmic pattern with letter patterns: HT BHTO HT PHTO and LL RLLR LL RLLR. The Tres Golpes part is a complex rhythmic pattern with letter patterns: SSB SPS O SO SPS and RLR LRL R LR LRL. The Quinto part is marked "Ad Lib" and has a note: "Improvisation and interaction with vocals, dancers and the other two drummers."

<sup>111</sup> Sublette, 266.

<sup>112</sup> Uribe, 98.

In *Street Music* the sound of the Puerto Rican *bomba*, so important to the immigrant community, is heard briefly as a percussion solo. As a matter of fact, the piece fades away with this lively rhythm perhaps as a nostalgic recollection of the *barrio* music.

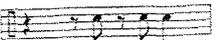
**EXAMPLE 101** (*Street Music*, mm. 112-115)

The image shows a musical score for three parts: Soprano (S), Tenor (T), and Percussion (perc.). The lyrics are: "migh-ty Buc-ca-neers are a com-in a pass hi lo". The percussion part features a complex rhythmic pattern characteristic of bomba, with various note values and rests.

Ortiz notates with precision the *bomba*'s basic pattern. Charley Gerard provides exactly the same pattern, except for the articulation, in his book on salsa and states that "The *bomba* is a Puerto Rican folkloric rhythm which salsa percussionists interpret using variants of the following cowbell and conga drum patterns:"<sup>113</sup>

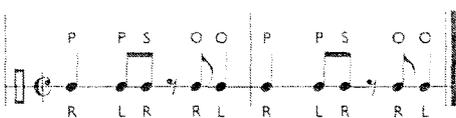
**EXAMPLE 102** (Outline of *bomba* rhythm)

Cowbell 

Conga 

Uribe provides the full pattern of the *bomba*, which demonstrates the accuracy of Ortiz' articulation: one high-pitched slap tone (S) followed by two open tones (O).

**EXAMPLE 103** (Full *bomba* rhythm)

Requinto 

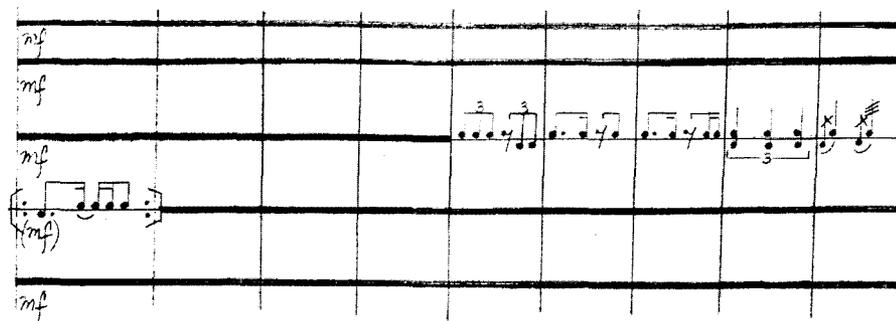
The Requinto improvises freely or plays this pattern with variations.

<sup>113</sup> Gerard, 126.

It is interesting to note that in the compact disc recording of Ortiz' chamber music the percussionist plays a fuller pattern, which suggests that an informed player would interpret and appreciate Ortiz' music differently than someone without any knowledge of the tradition.

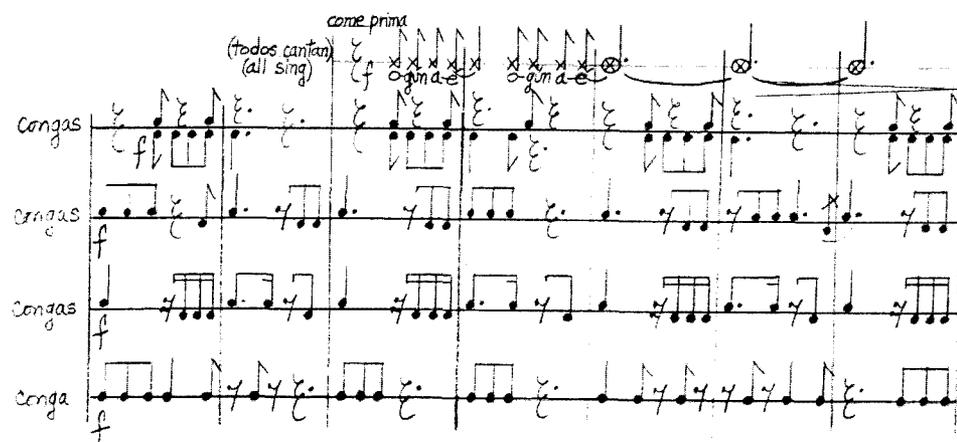
The *bomba* also appears in *Bembé* in the middle of a section with improvisation, singing, and a climatic *accelerando* leading towards the final section of the composition.

**EXAMPLE 104** (*Bembé*, mm. 388-396)



Other sections of *Bembé* evoke rather precisely the sound of Afro-Caribbean ritual music particularly because of the use of vocals and percussion only, the layered parts, the polyrhythmic texture, and the tight structure of the music.

**EXAMPLE 105** (*Bembé*, mm. 42-48)



In other moments it seems like many of these salsa rhythms are combined to create new textures. This passage from *Bembé* is an interesting mixture with the Afro-Caribbean, *conga-comparsa*, *plena-merengue*, and *cáscara* patterns.

**EXAMPLE 106** (*Bembé*, mm. 475-476)

Handwritten musical notation for Example 106, showing four rhythmic patterns on staves. The patterns are labeled on the right as Afro-Caribbean, Conga-comparsa, Plena-Merengue, and Cáscara. Each pattern is marked with a dynamic 'p' (piano). The Afro-Caribbean pattern is in 6/8 time, while the others are in 2/4 time. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

A more classic use of the salsa percussion section is seen in the last section of the composition where the *clave* is the driving force of the ensemble and the other parts support and embellish its structure.

**EXAMPLE 107** (*Bembé*, mm. 547-552)

Handwritten musical notation for Example 107, showing four percussion parts: congas, claves, ca. cerro, and timbales. The notation is in 2/4 time and includes various rhythmic values, rests, and dynamic markings such as 'p', 'f', and 'mf'. The congas part shows a complex syncopated rhythm. The claves part is a steady eighth-note pattern. The ca. cerro part is a steady eighth-note pattern. The timbales part is a steady eighth-note pattern with 'x' marks indicating specific rhythmic events.

In *Ghetto*, the surreal combination of *Sprechstimme* with the *plena* rhythm is justified by the text. The percussionist is the main carrier of this syncopated rhythm on two congas.

**EXAMPLE 108** (*Ghetto*, mm. 88-89)

Handwritten musical score for Example 108, measures 88-89 of *Ghetto*. The score is written on three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, with lyrics: "large strong ea-ghos the ac-tin-mic dance la ple-na". Above the vocal line, there is a tempo marking "♩ = 66" and the instruction "(Sprechstimme)". The middle staff is the piano accompaniment, with a "Timp." (Timpone) section. Dynamics include *f*, *mf*, and *p*.

*Ghetto* starts however with a vocalized Hip-hop sound box supported by the guitar and bass drum, which like many American genres emphasizes beats 2 and 4 instead of 1 and 3.

**EXAMPLE 109** (*Ghetto*, mm. 30-31)

Handwritten musical score for Example 109, measures 30-31 of *Ghetto*. The score is written on three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, with lyrics: "Ke sha". Above the vocal line, there is a tempo marking "♩ = 92 (beat box) (repeat 4x total)". The middle staff is the piano accompaniment, with a "B.D." (Bass Drum) section. Dynamics include *f* and *mf*.

In some instances, the other instrumentalists are the ones that have the more traditional patterns. That can be seen in this passage from *Del Caserío*, where the bassist and guitarist play a syncopated bass line that, like in traditional dance music, is chromatic and rhythmically anticipated.

**EXAMPLE 110** (Del Caserío, *mm.* 73-77)

The image shows a musical score for Example 110, consisting of six staves. The top four staves are vocal lines with lyrics. The fifth staff is a piano accompaniment with a forte (f) dynamic marking. The bottom staff is a bass line. The music is in 4/4 time and features a syncopated, anticipatory bass pattern.

Manuel explains the uniqueness of this rhythmic-melodic pattern found in several Latin American dance genres.

In most North American and Afro-American popular musics, from rock and rap to disco and doo-wop, the bass emphasizes the downbeat, falling strongly on the “one” beat of the four-beat measure. In the *son*, by contrast, the bass usually omits the downbeat entirely, in a pattern known as the *anticipated bass*... The resulting effect is quite different from the steady “thump-thump-thump” of such musics as disco, merengue, and most rock. Instead, the rhythm seems to glide along in a fluid manner reflected in the dance style... The anticipated bass pattern is found, with some variation, in most salsa songs; together with the characteristically syncopated piano and percussion parts, it forms an essential cog in the intricate machinery of Latin rhythm.<sup>114</sup>

Ortiz’ anticipated bass pattern is with variation particularly because of the three consecutive Gs and Cs. For a more traditional anticipated bass pattern in Ortiz’ percussion music see the guitar pattern in example thirty.

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<sup>114</sup> Manuel, 37-38.

## *F- Cross-rhythms and Polyrhythms*

The use of cross-rhythms in Ortiz' compositions for percussion seems to be related to the use of syncopated patterns, especially those associated with the dance music of Latin America. Ortiz often uses cross-rhythms to create the polyrhythmic textures of his music. This close relationship between cross-rhythms and polyrhythms is described in the following definition of a polyrhythm: "The superposition of different rhythms or metres...The term is closely related to (and sometimes used synonymously with) CROSS-RHYTHM, though the latter is properly restricted to rhythm that contradicts a given metric pulse or beat."<sup>115</sup> There also seems to exist a close connection between a particular cross-rhythm Ortiz' uses often in his music and the *clave* figure. The *clave* is an asymmetrical, syncopated pattern that incorporates a short cross-rhythm in its structure. The cross-rhythm is symmetrical but only one note of its pattern, the fourth, differs from the *clave*'s. This connection can be seen clearly in compositions like *Graffiti Nuyorican*, *Rapeo*, *Urbanización*, and *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, where both patterns appear in close proximity to each other or are played by the same instrument.

For example, in *Graffiti Nuyorican* the cross-rhythm and the *clave* are both performed by the percussionist on the claves with the pianist doubling the part.

### **EXAMPLE 111** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 61-62 and 90)

<sup>115</sup> *Polyrhythm*, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), 84.

The same cross-rhythm is played in augmentation at the end of the percussionist's solo.

**EXAMPLE 112** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 148-149)

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics "ce-ro el a-gua-ce-ro" and is marked with "con." and "ben." above it. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment with rhythmic markings (vertical lines with flags) and a 4x3 cross-rhythm pattern. The time signature is 3/4.

This 4x3 ratio is extremely common in the improvisation of popular musicians and Ortiz' favorite cross-rhythm. In this 3/4 measure of *Eco para un Grito Gris* it is easy to see that four equally-distant notes (dotted eighths) are performed in the space of three (quarter notes).

**EXAMPLE 113** (*Eco para un Grito Gris*, m. 24)

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics "ce-ro el a-gua-ce-ro" and is marked with "con." and "ben." above it. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment with rhythmic markings (vertical lines with flags) and a 4x3 cross-rhythm pattern. The time signature is 3/4.

These cross-rhythms not only create musical excitement but also increase the possibilities for hearing the music from more than one angle. For example, in *Eco para un Grito Gris* cross-rhythms are organized in such a way that the metric organization becomes ambiguous, giving way to a new underlying meter. The passage below, for example, could be interpreted as notated (in 3/4), in 3/8 if emphasizing a smaller syncopated subdivision, in 2/4 if focusing on the accents dividing the measure in two equal

sextuplets, or in 3/16 if emphasizing the smallest possible subdivision of the syncopated pattern.

**EXAMPLE 114** (*Eco para un Grito Gris*, mm. 20-23)

3/4 [                    ] etc.  
 2/4 [         ] [         ] etc.  
 3/8 [         ] [         ] etc.  
 3/16 [     ] [     ] [     ] [     ] etc.



Later on in the composition two cross-rhythms elide creating an interesting interplay between rhythm and pitch, which are independent.

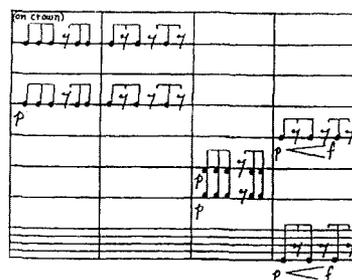
**EXAMPLE 115** (*Eco para un Grito Gris*, mm. 84-85)



3/16 [                    ]  
 3/8 [                    ] [                    ] [                    ]  
 A similar passage can be found in *Urbanización*, where even though the notated

meter is 6/8, the cross-rhythm alludes to 3/2 and 3/4.

**EXAMPLE 116** (*Urbanización*, mm. 149-152)



In *Loisai*, The marimbist plays a cross-rhythm that juxtaposes a 3/8 meter on top of the 4/4; the repetition of the melodic motive is particularly important in outlining the “new” meter.

**EXAMPLE 117** (*Loisai*, mm. 77-80)

Once again, the way the notes are grouped in this other passage in *Loisai* creates new listening possibilities. The use of repeated single pitches is deceptively simple. The bass clarinet part outlines either the notated 6/8 meter or a 3/8 meter, while the marimba part outlines a 2/4 meter. The uniqueness is in the layers of possible meters and in the displacement of the tenor drum rhythm, which create a sophisticated polyrhythmic texture where the downbeat is flexible, dependent on the listener’s perception.

**EXAMPLE 118** (*Loisai*, mm. 123-127)

6/8 [ ] etc.  
 3/8 [ ] [ ] etc.

2/4 [ ] [ ] [ ] etc.  
 Displaced 3/8 [ ] [ ] [ ] etc.

Another passage of *Urbanización* illustrates the richness derived from the simple displacement of a figure. In this passage, two ostinatos serve as the background to this improvisatory-like passage incorporating two distinct types of cross-rhythms.

**EXAMPLE 119** (*Urbanización*, mm. 180-184)



Disp. Triplets [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]  
 3/8 [ ]

The 4x3 can also be embellished as in this passage of *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*. Although Ortiz groups the notes (thirty-second notes) as usual, in groups of three, he articulates the first two of each group instead of just the first.

**EXAMPLE 120** (*Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*, mm. 171-175)



In the final section of *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*, the 4x3 cross-rhythm defies the notated meter and enriches the polyrhythmic texture.

**EXAMPLE 121** (*Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*, mm. 248-271)



In *Rapeo* the first cross-rhythm (in bar 76) is part of a motive that ends with two eighth notes and a few bars later (mm. 81-82) is played in augmentation. The second cross-rhythm is of the same type of those found in *Tamboleo* and *Eco para un Grito Gris*.

**EXAMPLE 122** (*Rapeo*, mm. 75-82)

The first cross-rhythmic motive is also heard in the flute part of *Ghetto*. The two eighth-notes at the end of the measure seem to be there in order to compensate for the 4x3 pattern finishing before the 4/4 measure is over.

**EXAMPLE 123** (*Ghetto*, mm. 188-189)

The traditional-like rhythms of *Bembé* are perfectly suited to this type of 4x3 cross-rhythm. Near the beginning of the piece the first and third percussionists are feature through solo cross-rhythms while the other players sing and clap.

**EXAMPLE 124** (*Bembé*, mm. 77-83)

3/8 [ ] [ ] [ ]

o - ba - tá chan - gó ye - ma - yá chan - gó  
o - ba - tá chan - gó ye - ma - yá chan - gó  
o - ba - tá chan - gó o - ba - tá ye - ma - yá chan - gó ye - ma - yá

3/16 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

This same type of cross-rhythm appears at the end of a bongo improvisation to signal a rhythmic break for the rest of the players. This kind of instrumental call and response is a unique feature of Afro-derived drumming traditions that have retained some aspects of African talking drum traditions.

**EXAMPLE 125** (*Bembé*, mm. 325-332)

[CALL ] [RESPONSE ]

In *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, the 4x3 cross-rhythm is treated *en masse* destroying all metrical feel since it is played only against the vocal narration. Clearly, Ortiz is after a certain musical energy that results from the conductor beating a meter not played by the ensemble.

**EXAMPLE 126** (*124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, near the end of the first movement)

The use of cross-rhythms in *Street Music* is somewhat different from all of these in that they are never established long enough or clearly enough for one to hear the implied meter. The result is a highly syncopated, polyrhythmic texture with fast-changing “meters.”

**EXAMPLE 127** (*Street Music*, mm. 27-32)

The “meters” suggested above each part are simply meant to show that the cross-rhythms contradict the 4/4 meter in a powerful way, especially when each part is independent like these are. The percussionist’s part on the vibraphone is the most varied, which contributes significantly to obscuring any sense of meter. This seems to be the point in this particular composition.

The use of cross-rhythms is so pervasive in *Tamboleo* that it will be treated separately in order to show its structural significance in the composition.

Some of the other polyrhythms in Ortiz’ percussion music are not a result of cross-rhythms (or the implied meters) but of the superimposition of distinct rhythms. In *Polifonía Salvaje*, for example, the two most common polyrhythms in Ortiz’ music (3x2

and 4x3) are constructed by the simple simultaneous use of eighth-notes and the Afro-Caribbean motive. If one considers the saxophone part, then another polyrhythm is present: 8x3.

**EXAMPLE 128** (*Polifonía Salvaje*, mm. 38-40)

Musical score for Example 128, showing four staves: Saxophone (Sax.), Bongoes, Platillo (Plat.), and Congas. The Saxophone part features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and slurs, marked with dynamics *p* and *mp*. The Bongoes part consists of a steady eighth-note pattern, marked *p*. The Platillo part has a simple rhythmic pattern, marked *p*. The Congas part features a complex polyrhythmic pattern with triplets and eighth notes, marked *p* and *mp*.

The same polyrhythms can be seen in this passage of *Eco Para un Grito Gris* or in certain places in *La Clave Bien Temperada*.

**EXAMPLE 129** (*Eco Para un Grito Gris*, mm. 25-27)

Musical score for Example 129, showing piano accompaniment with two staves: Treble Clef and Bass Clef. The score includes various rhythmic markings such as triplets, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *f*, *mp*, and *f*. There are also tempo or style markings like *B* and *4/4*.

**EXAMPLE 130** (*La Clave Bien Temperada*, mm. 52-53)

Musical score for Example 130, showing four staves for Clavichord (Clv. 1, Clv. 2, Clv. 3, Clv. 4). Each staff contains rhythmic patterns with triplets and eighth notes, all marked with the dynamic *mf*.

The 3x2 polyrhythm is the main idea in this passage of *Loisai* where the marimba plays in a triple time feel while the bass clarinet plays in a duple one.

**EXAMPLE 131** (*Loisai*, mm. 32-36)

The musical score for Example 131 consists of three staves. The top staff is marked 'meno mosso' and 'p'. It features a melodic line with a 3x2 polyrhythm, indicated by a '2' above the notes. The middle and bottom staves show complex rhythmic figures with triplets and duple patterns, also marked with 'p'.

In *Graffiti Nuyorican*, the polyrhythms are more flexible due to the constant change between eighth-notes and triplets or sixteenth-notes and triplets.

**EXAMPLE 132** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 75-78)

The musical score for Example 132 consists of three staves. The top staff is marked 'p' and 'f'. It features a melodic line with complex polyrhythmic patterns, including triplets and duple patterns, marked with '3' and '2' above the notes. The middle and bottom staves show complex rhythmic figures with triplets and duple patterns, also marked with '3' and '2' above the notes.

In *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines* and *Urbanización*, where Ortiz alternates the use of simple and compound meters, there is also simultaneous manifestations of duple and triple time feels.

**EXAMPLE 133** (*Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*, mm. 180-186)

The musical score for Example 133 consists of a single staff. It features a complex polyrhythmic pattern with a tempo marking of quarter note = 52. The score is marked with 'p', 'mf', and 'p' dynamics. The pattern includes triplets and duple patterns, marked with '3' and '2' above the notes.

**EXAMPLE 134** (*Urbanización*, mm. 161-165)

The score for Example 134 is in 4/4 time. It features a complex polyrhythmic texture. The top staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The music begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes a '(ord.)' marking. The middle staves show a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with various dynamics including *mp*, *f*, and *p*. The bottom staff features a bass clef and includes triplets and other rhythmic patterns. The piece concludes with a series of triplets in the bottom staff.

Because of the superimposition of distinct rhythmic motives in *Rapeo*, including cross-rhythmic ones, there are unique polyrhythmic textures in it.

**EXAMPLE 135** (*Rapeo*, mm. 13-17)

The score for Example 135 is a single staff in 4/4 time. It features a complex polyrhythmic texture. The music begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes a mezzo-forte (*mf*) and forte (*f*) dynamic. The piece concludes with a series of triplets.

In *Bembé*, polyrhythms also result from the simultaneous use of different meters in two places in the composition.

**EXAMPLE 136** (*Bembé*, mm. 501-508)

The score for Example 136 consists of four staves. The first staff is in 6/8 time, the second in 8/8 time, the third in 2/4 time, and the fourth in 6/8 time. The music begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and includes a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piece concludes with a series of triplets.

## *Pitch, Timbre, Texture, Harmony, Form, and Development*

In the next portion of this document the author will analyze select traits from different compositions in order to examine some of those important elements of Ortiz' music that are not rhythmic. Ortiz has mentioned his interest in experimental forms, instrumental color, the language of the street, the Nuyorican experience, and Latin American drumming traditions. Concerning his process of composition he says:

My compositional process is intuitive. I have dabbled with various compositional techniques as a student, but I have arrived at a non-dogmatic approach to musical structure. For me, it is a way of creatively experiencing the multiplicity of human experience. Consciously I have been inspired by the thoughts, sounds and pacing of urban life. This may convert into some musical ideas, which I may process and develop through fragmentation, variation, hoquet and transposition. Each composition is a personal journey with its very own narrative, be it for pitched or non-pitched instruments.<sup>116</sup>

While there are many rhythmic similarities in Ortiz' compositions for percussion, it is in fact difficult to compartmentalize the study of other musical elements. The unique narrative of each composition manifests itself clearly not in the rhythmic realm necessarily, but in relation to Ortiz' pitch material. Therefore, the following analysis takes into consideration the uniqueness of each composition and the common techniques used (fragmentation, variation, hocket, and transposition) as the starting points.

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<sup>116</sup> Ortiz, interview, 26 March 2005.

## *Street Music*

*Street Music* is one of Ortiz' most important chamber works and it is as much about rhythm as it is about timbre. What Donald Thompson refers to as "obsessively rhythmic and percussive" in many compositions by Ortiz and certainly present in *Street Music*, is the unorthodox use of "melodic" instruments. In *Street Music*, for example, the flute and the trombone have almost no melody, in the strictest sense of the word. Ortiz' use of pitch can be quite remarkable though; one can easily underestimate the importance of register and note repetition in his scores. Pitch is not only treated as part of melodic ideas and harmonic schemes but also as important colors. In *Street Music*, single pitches and their particular colors are fully exploited; they gain a prominent place in determining small and large sections of the composition. This is made possible because of the percussive repetition of single pitches in all parts, which are reminiscent of city noises such as car horns, construction metal hammering, and ambulance sirens.

At the beginning of the piece, the alto flute plays a series of syncopated figures and cross-rhythms on the pitch A (the score is at concert pitch). The vibraphone gradually introduces the pitch G in the same rhythmic fashion, followed by the trombone playing on G#. Because of the independent rhythms, the sequential entrances, and the distinct timbres of each instrument, the three pitches (only a half step apart) remain quite distinct from each other. In fact, after hearing those pitches over a considerable amount of time, they become unforgettable colors imprinted in the listener's mind. The heterogeneous sounding ensemble is not only established by the use of contrasting percussion instruments such as the vibraphone, roto-tom, cowbell, and gong, but also the use of alto, soprano, and piccolo flutes and the trombone with and without mutes.

EXAMPLE 137 (Street Music, mm. 1-20)

STREET MUSIC  
(for flute, trombone and percussion)

WILLIAM ORTIZ

(♩ = 100) *rústico*

alto flute  
tenor trombone  
Percussion

fl.  
tb.  
Perc.

fl.  
tb.  
Perc.

*p*  
*(marcato off)*

*can. sol. (harmon.)*

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In the following major section of the composition, which is at a slower tempo ( $q=56$ ), it is the percussionist who has the predominant pitch collection in the roto-tom part. It is also a three-note set (C, D, and E) but now a major ninth apart from each other. In measure 43, the flute, the trombone, and the vibraphone introduce a more “melodic” motive, which has an ominous quality as if indicative of the dangers of the city at night. This motive is comprised of two tritones a perfect fourth apart. The only pitch added to the collection is the Eb since the A is prominent in the flute part, the Ab has been heard in the trombone part as a G#, and the D is played by the roto-tom.

**EXAMPLE 138** (*Street Music*, mm. 43-45)

The trombone is responsible for the introduction of the next new pitch through the performance of a very expressive mute glissando from E to F, the new pitch in measure 69.

**EXAMPLE 139** (*Street Music*, mm. 68-71)

In measure 71, the flute part has the pitch B, which creates a new tritone from the pitch F just introduced by the trombonist. This one note (B) will only appear again in the final measures of the piece played in octaves by the trombone and flute.

**EXAMPLE 140** (*Street Music*, mm. 198-199)

The image shows a musical score for measures 198 and 199. The score is for three parts: Flute (fl.), Trombone (Trb.), and Percussion (Perc.). The Flute part is marked with a circled '198' above the first measure and has a dynamic marking of *pp*. The Trombone part is marked with '(Senza cord.)' and has a dynamic marking of *pp*. The Percussion part has a dynamic marking of *pp*. The score shows a complex rhythmic pattern with many notes and rests, typical of a percussive or rhythmic section.

The next new pitch in *Street Music* only appears in measure 144. It is a Bb followed by an E played by the trombone and flute two octaves apart. This is another tritone basically transposing the first part of the ominous motive a half step up.

**EXAMPLE 141** (*Street Music*, mm. 143-145)

The image shows a musical score for measures 143, 144, and 145. The score is for three parts: Flute (fl.), Trombone (Trb.), and Percussion (Perc.). The Flute part is marked with a circled '144' above the first measure and has a dynamic marking of *f*. The Trombone part is marked with a circled '144' above the first measure and has a dynamic marking of *f*. The Percussion part has a dynamic marking of *f*. The score shows a complex rhythmic pattern with many notes and rests, typical of a percussive or rhythmic section.

The use of the octave seems to be, along with note repetition and pitch economy, another timbral technique very effective in *Street Music* and other compositions by Ortiz. The octave is used not only to transpose or reinforce a melodic idea but also to retain a

sonority while changing its color in accordance with a need for different volume, shape, or density. This is clear in the flute part of the next example (see also Example 24 on page sixty-five).

**EXAMPLE 142** (*Street Music*, mm. 97-100)

The image displays two musical staves. The left staff is a single-line score for a flute, marked with a circled '99' above it. The right staff is a multi-line score for a percussion ensemble, including flutes (fl.), trombones (trb.), and percussion (Perc.). The music is characterized by dense, syncopated rhythms and a complex polyrhythmic texture. The flute part features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the percussion ensemble provides a driving, rhythmic accompaniment.

The entire pitch collection used in *Street Music* is: C, D, Eb, E, G, G#, A, Bb, B. The pitches C#, F and F# are never used. The intervals favored throughout the composition are minor seconds, major seconds, perfect fourths, tritones, major ninths, and octaves. *Street Music* shows not only the importance of syncopated rhythm in Ortiz' compositions for percussion but also the importance of pitches as more precise colors. The structure of the composition revolves around, primarily, two contrasting sections and the discrete introduction of pitches, or colors. The A section is fast, rhythmically driving portraying the business of street life. The sound of muted trombone reminds one of cars honking impatiently while the metallic vibraphone timbre resembles closely the hammering at construction sites. The chaotic nature of an urban center is recreated with a rather dense polyrhythmic texture where each player concentrates on his own syncopated and cross-rhythmic patterns. The ever-changing syncopated rhythms give the music an improvisatory quality that propel the music forward and keep it fresh despite the

repetition of the same pitches. The B section is slower and almost if hearing the noises of the street from a distance, with the percussionists producing mostly soft sounds with the interjection of abrupt noises disrupting the quietness of the neighborhood.

**EXAMPLE 143** (*Street Music*, mm. 45-49)

A musical score for measures 45-49 of 'Street Music'. It features a single staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The music consists of short, rhythmic attacks. Dynamic markings include *mf*, *mp*, *p*, *f*, and *p*. There is a 'cord' marking in measure 49.

The atmospheric nature of this section is enhanced by the contrast of the short attacks played mainly by the percussionists with the sustained sounds of the flute, trombone, gong, triangle, and vibraphone.

**EXAMPLE 144** (*Street Music*, mm. 50-53)

A musical score for measures 50-53 of 'Street Music'. It features three staves: Flute (fl.), Trombone (trb.), and Percussion (Perc.). The Flute part has a long, sustained note in measure 52. The Trombone part has a cross-rhythm in measure 59. The Percussion part has a unison rhythmic break in measure 64. Dynamic markings include *p*, *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *p*, and *mf*.

In measure 59, the trombone has a cross-rhythm that sounds as if the car horn is announcing the beginning of another busy day of work. Likewise in bar 64, the unison rhythmic break sounds almost like a jackhammer.

**EXAMPLE 145** (*Street Music*, mm. 59-65)

These associations in *Street Music* are simply left to the interpretation of the listener. The beauty of Ortiz' craft is that the street sounds become music to him.

The form of *Street Music* looks like this:

A	B	C	A	B	A
q=100	q=56	q=100/63/100/56	q=100	q=56	q=100
mm. 1-33	34-59	60-67/68-69/70/71-76	77-117	118-142	143-204
A/G/G#	C/D/E/Eb	F B			Bb
Alto flute Harmo.	flute	Plunger/ord.	Harmo.	Alto/flute Cup/ord./harmo.	Piccolo Ord.

It is possible to suggest that the form of *Street Music* is a type of Developmental Rondo and that in the very compressed C section (measures 60 through 76), Ortiz develops familiar material through fragmentation and tempo variations.

At the second A section, Ortiz varies the texture by reinforcing the flute part with a non-pitched instrument played by the second percussionist.

**EXAMPLE 146** (*Street Music*, mm. 93-96)

The transition to the second B section is also varied by the addition of a sonic graffiti, which is that traditional *bomba* rhythm played by the percussionist on a conga.

**EXAMPLE 147** (*Street Music*, mm. 112-116)

The musical score for Example 147 consists of three staves: Flute (fl), Trombone (trb), and Percussion (Perc.). The lyrics are "migh-ty Buc-ca-neers are a com-in a pass hi lo." The percussion part features a complex rhythmic pattern, including a section labeled "bomba" with a "cort." (cortado) marking. The flute and trombone parts are highly syncopated and integrated with the percussive sounds.

The flute and trombone timbres are also integrated with the percussion sounds. That is especially true in the B sections. The following passage shows Ortiz' hocketed texture, which incorporates the sounds of the flute and trombone.

**EXAMPLE 148** (*Street Music*, mm. 136-141)

The musical score for Example 148 consists of three staves: Flute (fl), Trombone (trb), and Percussion (Perc.). The score is highly complex and hocketed, with many notes beamed together. The percussion part is marked with a dynamic of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The flute and trombone parts are highly syncopated and integrated with the percussive sounds.

## *Graffiti Nuyorican*

*Graffiti Nuyorican* is one of Ortiz' most important compositions for percussion.

The percussion writing is mature placing the percussion part on the same footing with the piano; in fact, the instruments complement each other very well creating a rich array of colors at the composer's disposal. It also integrates the use of popular music and modern art music resources in a very unique way. In *Graffiti Nuyorican*, like in *Street Music*, Ortiz's eclectic identity assimilates the seemingly opposing facets of very different cultures in an integrated form. Professor Carlos Gil writes the following regarding Ortiz' Nuyorican identity, which is especially pertinent to this composition:

If you would ask me for a concrete image of the musical work of William Ortiz I would have to say: the Newyorican mural. On the mural, time has been detained. It is a time that does not exist anymore on the Island (the hut, the serene and placid country home of the peasant, the starlit nights). Traditions that vanished but that were recorded in the tragic eye of the immigrants of the Marine Tiger in the decade of the '30s. It was a country spoken about by the elderly to the young who, never being able to travel to the land of their ancestors, dreamed about it when it wasn't anymore. Our composer is not immune to this phenomena.<sup>117</sup>

In fact, one of the most interesting aspects of the composition is not only the vocalized graffiti but also the sonic ones. The structure of *Graffiti Nuyorican* is easily recognized as having three parts. Ortiz even gives titles to each section of the piece: I. A Lower Eastside Poem, II. Broken English Dream, and III. South Bronx Prayer. There are no breaks between sections and the first two sections are different in character. The first has a sustaining and dark quality while the second features dance-like figures of short

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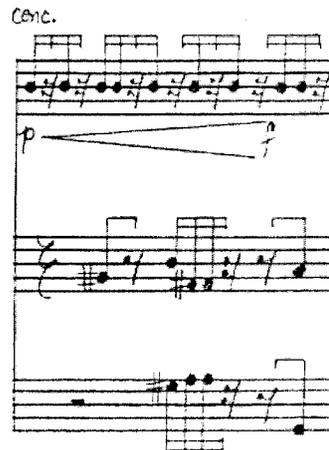
<sup>117</sup> Carlos Gil, Liner notes of *Chamber Music/Música de Cámara*, William Ortiz Records (WO 330CD), 1990. [The mural is a type of public art often bringing attention to the daily lives of the poor and marginalized].





The percussionist again has the graffiti part in measure 74: a *cáscara* pattern, like that played by the pianist in the *descarga* section, very appropriately played on the cowbell.

**EXAMPLE 153** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, m. 74)



A fragment of this pattern is heard in measure 88 right before the most poignant use of musical graffiti in the composition. Between measures 88 and 90 both a vocal and instrumental graffiti are heard. The percussionist speaks “even Beethoven can’t keep up to my latino reality,” according to Ortiz an exclamation of Latino pride, at which point a full statement of the *clave* pattern is heard and supported by the piano. This is the only time the full pattern is heard in the composition as if Ortiz is saying that it is only in music that Latinos are completely fulfilled. Additionally, the fact that the piano player does not speak the text with the percussionist is almost symbolic of the more significant role of percussion traditions in the Caribbean.

**EXAMPLE 154** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 88-90)

In fact, this section of the piece ends with both players performing the *cáscara* pattern, the pianist playing as a percussionist four octaves of a single pitch.

**EXAMPLE 155** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 96-98)

*Graffiti Nuyorican* is also concerned with the exploration of colors. However, this exploration takes a very different shape than in *Street Music* for example. The composer explains:

In *Graffiti Nuyorican* I was looking for basic sound sources that provided long and short attacks, sustain and decay and rich harmonic overtone structures. Metallic percussion instruments and the piano have these qualities. My desire was

to create new sounds as organic, beautiful and complex as those of the real world, in a music that reflects the aesthetics and attitudes of an urban society.<sup>119</sup>

In the first few bars of the composition, the importance of color, duration, and articulation is immediately felt. The timbales gesture on the first measure ends with a *forte* attack integrating a cluster chord on the piano, which creates a rich sonority where single pitches do not stand out, unlike the beginning of *Street Music*. The following long cluster chord played *piano* basically creates a resonant echo of the previous chord. In measure 4, the unison on piano and bongos create a new, more percussive gesture that ends *secco*. The ninth interval (C to D) on the piano part is not only prominent in *Graffiti Nuyorican* but also in several other compositions by Ortiz. The gesture in measures 5 and 6 is similar to that of measures 1 and 2; in fact Ortiz basically inverts (with the exception of the Ab) the first chord of the piece moving the right hand chord to the bass clef and the left one to the treble clef. However, the sound of the cymbal roll is more brilliant than the timbales' and the cowbell roll underneath the piano chord creates another beautiful contrasting color. Ortiz clearly seems to have a heterogeneous sound ideal.

**EXAMPLE 156** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 1-6)

I. A LOWER EASTSIDE POEM ♩=66

The musical score consists of two systems of staves. The top system contains four percussion staves: Timbales, Bongos, Platillo (cymbal), and Congas. The bottom system contains two piano staves (treble and bass clef). The score is marked with dynamics such as *ppp*, *f*, *p*, *pp*, and *mp*. A tempo marking of ♩=66 is present at the beginning. The piece is in 3/4 time. The percussion parts feature various rhythmic patterns and accents, while the piano part features complex chordal textures and melodic lines.

<sup>119</sup> Ortiz, interview, 26 March, 2005.

The wide pitch range explored in this piece as well as all of the notes of the chromatic scale give the piece a more expansive character than that of *Street Music*. In the next few bars, the extreme registers of the piano and the vibraphone create bell-like sounds rich in overtones.

**EXAMPLE 157** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 7-13)

The image shows a musical score for Example 157, spanning measures 7 to 13. It features two staves: the upper staff is for vibraphone and the lower staff is for piano. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 44. The score includes various dynamics such as *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *pp* (pianissimo), and *f* (forte). Performance instructions include "vibrafono", "piano", "con.", "tomb.", "vib.", and "piano off". There are also markings for "Ped." (pedal) and "Bv." (basso continuo). The notation includes chords, single notes, and rests, with some notes marked with "3" for triplets.

The use of pitch in *Graffiti Nuyorican* is not pre-conditioned by harmonic plans of the common-practice or twentieth century periods. Ortiz uses pitches in *Graffiti Nuyorican* like John Cage and Edgard Varèse used them: as pure sounds. Color is the driving force particularly in the first section of the piece and unity derives from gestural similarities, rhythm, and shape. For example, the downward movement of chords becomes an important memory aid for the listener. Ortiz seems to establish this from the movement of the right hand at the very beginning of the piece.

**EXAMPLE 158** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 2, 19, and 34)

The image shows three musical staves for Example 158, illustrating chordal structures. The first staff shows a chord with dynamics *f* and *p*. The second staff shows a chord with dynamic *mf*. The third staff shows a chord with dynamic *mf*. The notation includes notes on a five-line staff, with some notes beamed together and others separated by stems.

Although it seems that Ortiz intuitively makes a free use of dissonances and the twelve pitches of the scale, he does have control over his pitch material. Like in *Street*

*Music*, Ortiz shows a masterful use of pitch as color in the first section of *Graffiti Nuyorican*, which is fifty-two measures long. This happens in particular in relation to the pitch B in the piano part, which appears only two times until measure 27. The first time, it is hardly noticeable because it is part of a cluster and spelled as a Cb (see previous example). The second time, it also passes by quickly as part of a piano figuration on measure 10 (see Example 157). The third time, on the other hand, it is treated with much emphasis because it not only enhances the *clave* graffiti as a strong color in sharp contrast to the surrounding Bbs (see Example 150) but it affects the “tonality” of the next section of the composition.

**EXAMPLE 159** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 35-39)

Ortiz is also fond of stacking pitches, often clusters, note by note. That is seen, although briefly, in *Graffiti Nuyorican* not only in the piano bass clef part (mm. 30-31) but also in the vibraphone’s (m. 34).

**EXAMPLE 160** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 30-31, 34)

In the next major section of the piece, *Broken English Dream*, the pianist introduces an important melodic motive that is central to the development of this section. Interesting enough, it has the same beginning pitches of *Street Music* (G, G#, and A).

**EXAMPLE 161** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 53-57)

II. BROKEN ENGLISH DREAM ♩ = 88

The musical score for Example 161 consists of three staves. The top staff is for a melodic line with dynamics ranging from *ppp* to *f*. The middle staff is for a percussive line with dynamics from *p* to *f*. The bottom staff is for a bass line with dynamics from *pp* to *f*. The score includes performance instructions such as *attacca*, *orgas*, *conc.*, and *timb.* (timpani). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 88.

Its fragmented, “broken” profile generates a light, syncopated dance-like feel that inspires the sonic graffiti that appears primarily in the percussion part: *rumba*, *cáscara*, and *clave*. The motive is transposed with some variation near the midpoint of this section again, like the pitch B in the first section of the composition, changing the direction of the music.

**EXAMPLE 162** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 85-87)

The musical score for Example 162 consists of two systems. The first system shows a melodic line and a bass line. The second system shows a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass clef. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics.

The last section of the composition, *South Bronx Prayer*, is the most intriguing from the point of view of form because it could easily be understood as a quasi-simultaneous recapitulation of the two previous sections. However, it is so fragmented that it seems to relate more to a mental state that is highly complex for the memory sometimes recollects the past in unpredictable, disorganized fashion. In fact the players sing “La Bodega sold Dreams.” Ortiz seems to recall those most prominent passages, which include the Latin American sonic graffiti, as he is in the process of composing the

final section. These recalled passages can reappear exactly as before or somehow different. For example, the beginning motive of the second section is recalled in measures 127 and 128. The pitches are exactly the same but the rhythm and context are different. It is also significant to mention that just as the piano plays percussion motives, here the percussionist too plays the piano's.

**EXAMPLE 163** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 127-128)

Musical score for Example 163, measures 127-128. The score is written for piano and percussion. The piano part is on the top two staves, and the percussion part is on the bottom two staves. The piano part starts with a 'cen.' (conga) motif, followed by 'Plat.' (platter) and 'claves' motifs. The percussion part has a 'Con.' (conga) motif. Dynamics include mp and mf.

After a shorter and varied appearance of the *descarga* section, several motives from the first section appear “out of order.”

**EXAMPLE 164** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 153-159)

Musical score for Example 164, measures 153-159. The score is written for piano and percussion. The piano part is on the top two staves, and the percussion part is on the bottom two staves. The piano part starts with a 'cen.' (conga) motif, followed by 'Timb.' (timbale) and 'Con.' (conga) motifs. The percussion part has a 'Tr.' (trumpet) motif. Dynamics include f, mp, and p.

From: m.10, m.2, m.14, m.9, m.131

From: m.126

From: m.25, similar gesture on mm.7-8, m.16

Even the beginning of the third section is recalled with some variation creating a unique context where the listener can only use his natural instinct in remembering what he has heard.

**EXAMPLE 165** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 101-106)

**EXAMPLE 166** (*Graffiti Nuyorican*, mm. 169-174)

## *Polifonía Salvaje*

*Polifonía Salvaje* is a unique piece in Ortiz' percussion output. The title, wild polyphony, is particularly appropriate for the beginning and ending of the piece where the percussionist and saxophonist have *ad libitum* passages that are coordinated in some places and uncoordinated in others. As a matter of fact, the contrasting texture of the middle section completes the simple arch-form, ABA, of this composition. The unique texture of the A sections is established by the playing of notes of free duration, hocketed phrases, note against note, and groups of notes as fast as possible in both parts (the only other percussion work by Ortiz that makes extensive use of this type of notation is *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*). The B section is also polyphonic but in a more traditional sense. It is marked *fugato*, which reflects the imitative counterpoint that takes place between sax and percussion, and has a steady pulse, and melodic devices associated with baroque polyphonic music: interval inversion, transposition, and diminution. In this small fuge, however, it is the saxophonist that imitates the rhythm and shape of the rather lyrical "subject" presented by the percussionist in the first four measures.

### **EXAMPLE 167** (*Polifonía Salvaje*, mm. 1-8 of *fugato*)

The image shows a musical score for Example 167, which is the first eight measures of the 'fugato' section of 'Polifonía Salvaje'. The score is written for saxophone and percussion. It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 92 and the instruction 'tempo giusto fugato'. The saxophone part starts with a melodic subject in measure 1, and the percussion part enters in measure 2 with a rhythmic pattern. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mp*, *p*, and *mf*, and performance instructions like 'tempo giusto' and 'fugato'. A 'Vibr.' marking is present in measure 8. The score is presented in three systems: the first system shows measures 1-4, the second system shows measures 5-8, and a third system shows a detail of measure 8 with a triplet and vibrato.

At the restatement of the subject in measure 26, the roles are reversed and the percussionist imitates the saxophonist starting in measure 30. The texture is thickened by

a third line played on the congas; it is the Afro-Caribbean motive that is found in several other compositions by Ortiz.

**EXAMPLE 168** (*Polifonía Salvaje*, mm. 26-33 of *fugato*)

The image shows a musical score for Example 168. It consists of two systems of staves. The top system has a saxophone staff with a treble clef and a conga staff with a bass clef. The saxophone part features a melodic line with vibrato markings (wavy lines above notes) and dynamic markings like *p* and *mp*. The conga part has a rhythmic pattern with triplets and dynamic markings like *f* and *mp*. The bottom system continues the saxophone and conga parts with similar markings.

The use of pitch in *Polifonía Salvaje* also has traits of serial music. For example, there is a main pitch collection that is kept in order for the most part and disjunct melodic movement is widespread. The structure of the main pitch collection is organized in groups of six notes, a major second or a minor second apart. The only exception being the F# in the last group:

<u>D</u> <u>Eb</u> <u>G</u> <u>F#</u> <u>A</u> <u>Bb</u>	<u>Eb</u> <u>F</u> <u>D</u> <u>C</u> <u>A</u> <u>G</u>	<u>Bb</u> <u>C</u> <u>F#</u> <u>E</u> <u>G</u> <u>A</u>	<u>D</u> <u>Eb</u> (F#) <u>Bb</u> <u>A</u> <u>D</u> <u>Eb</u>
Minor seconds	Major seconds	Major seconds	Minor seconds

The collection first appears in this hocketed passage, that includes shouts, but it is incomplete. The pitches D and G of the first group are missing and the first Eb is repeated.

**EXAMPLE 169** (*Polifonía Salvaje*, line 4 of page 1)

The image shows a musical score for Example 169. It features four staves: Saxophone (Sax.), Bongoes, Platillo (Plat.), and Congas. The saxophone part has a melodic line with dynamic markings *p* and *f*, and includes vocalizations like "hablar" and "ja". The Bongoes part has a rhythmic pattern with dynamic markings *p* and *f*, and includes vocalizations like "ya" and "ja". The Platillo and Congas parts have rhythmic patterns with dynamic markings *p* and *f*, and include a vocalization "hablar".

On page two of the score (there are no barlines in this section) the collection becomes prominent in the note runs played by the saxophonist. Ortiz does not group the notes in separate groups of six notes and makes ample use of octave transposition to give interest to the lines while unifying the pitch content. Additionally, some of the notes are sustained, some are omitted, and there are three added Cs. The pitch collection is stated three times before the fugato. The beginning of each cycle is marked with an asterisk.

**EXAMPLE 170** (*Polifonía Salvaje*, lines 3, 4, 5 of page 2)

The musical score for Example 170 consists of three systems of music for Saxophone, Bongoes, Platillo, and Congas. The first system features a saxophone line with a trill (tr.) and a pitch collection marked with an asterisk (\*), labeled "no D" and "(C) no A". The second system continues the saxophone line with a crescendo (cres.) and a pitch collection marked with an asterisk (\*), labeled "(elided), no D & G". The third system shows a saxophone line with a pitch collection marked with an asterisk (\*), labeled "(C) (C) no A" and "no Eb", and includes markings for "fr." and "accel.". The percussion parts (Bongoes, Platillo, Congas) provide a rhythmic accompaniment throughout the section.

The pitch content of the *fugato*, middle section also derives partly from this series of notes. It starts though as a metric re-interpretation of the notes played at the top of page two. White notes become half notes, black notes quarter notes, the two grace notes

become two eighth notes and the three grace notes become eighth note triplets. The part starts a minor third down on E and intervallic inversions change the direction of the melody as well. The intervals between notes are marked in the music.

**EXAMPLE 171** (*Polifonía Salvaje*, source of *fugato* pitch material)

M2 P4 M2 M7/m13/m9/M6 m3 M7 M2

m2/m2/M6/+12/M9/m3/P4/m7/o5/m9/P5/m7/m3/o11/m9/P4/M7/M9/P5

**EXAMPLE 172** (*Polifonía Salvaje*, mm. 4-11 of *fugato* section, intervallic analysis)

M9 P5 m7/m9/m3/M7/m10/m3/M7 M9

M7/m2/m10/o5/M2/M6/P12/M9/o5/m9/P5/m9/m10/o11/m9

P5 M7/M2 P5

After one bar, the main pitch collection appears in measured form, transposed, and inverted. Again there are small omissions and alterations to create variety. The collection is played three times, like in the section preceding the *fugato*, the second and third times however are in diminution (sixteenth notes).

**EXAMPLE 173** (*Polifonía Salvaje*, mm. 11-22 of *fugato* section, main pitch collection)

Sax. *mf*

Sax. *mp* *fr.* *fr.*

noB ] [ (G) ] [ (A)noF# ]

Sax. *p* *mp*

[ ] [ ] [ incomplete ] [ ] [noB&E] [ ]

Sax. *f* *p* *mp* *gliss.*

[ ] [ (A)(A) ] NEW MATERIAL ----->

The *fugato* melody is repeated one more time from measure 26 to 46 but with octave transpositions. The only change happens in measure 38 where a measure with the original pitch collection, although incomplete, is inserted right before the diminution.

**EXAMPLE 174** (*Polifonía Salvaje*, mm.38-39, original pitch collection and transposition)

Sax. *p*

Sax. *mp*

[ ] [ ] [incom.] TRANSPosed

Color is also a significant feature in *Polifonía Salvaje*. The hocket effect between percussion and saxophone, which also includes vocal shouts, creates unique contrasting colors (see Example 169). At the very beginning of the piece, on the other hand, the percussionist uses his hands until he has to roll on the cymbals with sticks (*con palos*). The percussionist then not only plays on the head of the bongos and congas but also their wooden sides (*golpear madera*), adding sharp attacks to the warmer membrane timbres.

**EXAMPLE 175** (*Polifonía Salvaje*, fifth line of page one)

Musical score for Example 175. The score is for Saxophone (Sax.), Bongoes, Platillo (Plat.), and Congas. The Saxophone part begins with a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking and a melodic line with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals). The Bongoes part has a 'golpear madera' (hit wood) instruction. The Congas part has dynamic markings *p*, *f*, and *ff* (fortissimo) with a crescendo line. The score is written in a single system with four staves.

Of particular importance is the fact that Ortiz uses special colors to mark structural points. The warm timbre of the hands against the conga skin at the beginning has already been mentioned. During the *fugato*, the percussionist plays a stroke on the crown of the cymbal right before the sax starts playing the main pitch collection.

**EXAMPLE 176** (*Polifonía Salvaje*, mm. 11-13 of *fugato*)

Musical score for Example 176. The score is for Saxophone (Sax.), Bongoes, Platillo (Plat.), and Congas. The Saxophone part features a trill ('tr.') and dynamic markings *mf* and *f*. The Bongoes part has a dynamic marking *mf*. The Platillo part has a 'crown' marking and a dynamic marking *p*. The Congas part has a dynamic marking *mf*. The score is written in a single system with four staves.

Likewise, before the restatement of the *fugato*, the percussionist plays one accented *secco* stroke on the cymbal.

**EXAMPLE 177** (*Polifonía Salvaje*, m. 25 of *fugato*)

Musical score for Example 177. The score is for a single staff with a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking, a sharp sign, and rhythmic notation with dynamic markings *p* and *mf*. The notation includes a '3 p' and '4' above the staff, and a '3' and '4' below the staff, indicating a 3/4 time signature. A 'secco' marking is also present. The score is written in a single system with one staff.

The saxophonist also has several trills, vibratos, glissandi, and flutter tonguing enhancing the timbre of his instrument.

## *Loisai*

The tonal vocabulary of *Loisai* is unique in the context of Ortiz' percussion music. Perhaps central to its understanding are the presence of tonally ambiguous passages and the use of extended chords. There is also a certain gentle quality in its lilting rhythms and pretty melodies. For the first seven bars of the composition, the bass clarinet and marimba take turns in introducing the pitch material. It is not clear at that point if the low F played by the clarinetist (the bass clarinet sounds a M9 lower than written) is harmonically significant or simply a color because of its repetitive, rhythmic quality that is doubled by the tenor drum. This happens to be an important syncopated motive, similar to the seventh Afro-Cuban cell provided by Fernando Ortiz (see example 20 on page 61), found throughout the composition. The marimba has a short three-note chord progression that, due to the lack of thirds, does not establish a key area either. The tonal direction is unclear since the first chord could be an A major chord with D in the bass or a D major (M7) chord without the third or, if one considers the note F played by the bass clarinet, a D minor (M7) chord. The second and third chords do not have thirds and could be analyzed as based on quartal harmony (BEA and EAD). Their harmonic movement seems to be cyclical, as if moving in a closed circle. The entire pitch collection from measure 1 to the first beat of 9 is simply that of a D melodic minor scale, although it is not used in a common practice period context. Gradually, however, it is the pitch E that becomes prominent and turns into a sort of point of reference to all other "keys." The pitch E gains force particularly through the use of the rhythmic motive. That can be seen starting in measure 7 and clearly in measure 10.

EXAMPLE 178 (*Loisai*, mm. 1-11)

WILLIAM ORTIZ

$\text{♩} = 68$  moderato

Bb Bass Clarinet

Marimba (percussion): Tenor Drum, Snare Drum, Large Cymbal

Tenor Drum: T.D.

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The interval of a third does become important harmonically and melodically, especially when associated with short melodic motives like in measure 9 (see above) or in short canons like this.

**EXAMPLE 179** (*Loisai*, mm. 22-23)

But also in the extended chords, which create a harmonic richness not found in other percussion compositions by Ortiz. Because the chords do not move functionally, their movement is unpredictable at places and their spelling flexible. For example, in measures 16 and 17 the resultant chord is a FM7 (#11) plus the G of the trill. The same chord could be spelled as an A minor (M9) in first inversion with the bass on F. The next chord could be spelled as a B  $\phi$ 7 (4) in third inversion. The following chord is the same as the first and the final chord could be spelled as a F M9 (4).

**EXAMPLE 180** (*Loisai*, m 16-17)

At certain places the harmony is much simpler but clearly based on thirds as can be seen in these measures of parallel moving thirds and sixths.

**EXAMPLE 181** (*Loaisai*, mm. 144-147)

In other places, like in the second major section of the composition starting in measure 32, the parallel perfect fourth intervals of the marimba accompaniment are more prominent, even though there is a sense of C# minor tonality as a result of the focus given to that pitch by the bass clarinet.

**EXAMPLE 182** (*Loaisai*, mm. 32-36)

Near the end of the work, between measures 133 and 141, these tendencies of triadic and quartal sounds seem to fuse completely. The marimba has an F minor (m7) chord and the clarinet plays a Bb on the bottom. Next the marimba has an Ab major (M9) chord in third inversion with the bass clarinet playing F on the bottom. The last marimba chord is the same but with the ninth on the bottom while the bass clarinet plays a low Db. This

glorious harmonic progression of note extensions can be rearranged either in thirds or in fourths:

Thirds—Bb, Db, F, Ab, C, and Eb

Fourths—C, F, Bb, Eb, Ab, and Db

**EXAMPLE 183** (*Loaisai*, mm. 138-141)

The musical score for Example 183 consists of three systems. The first system features three staves: the top staff has a melodic line starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic, the middle staff has a rhythmic accompaniment, and the bottom staff has a bass line. The second system also has three staves, with the top staff marked *f* and the bottom staff marked *p*. The third system continues with three staves, with the top staff marked *f* and the bottom staff marked *p*. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings.

Dyads are also significant in *Loaisai*; they function not only in the context of chords but also of rhythmic motives and small cluster structures. These notes are stacked one by one and can be found in other percussion compositions by Ortiz. In the first example below, measure 31 ends with the five notes of a B pentatonic scale sounding together.

**EXAMPLE 184** (*Loaisai*, mm. 30-31 and 95-96)

The musical score for Example 184 consists of two systems. The first system has two staves: the top staff has a melodic line with dynamics *p* and *f*, and the bottom staff has a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system also has two staves, with the top staff marked *mf* and the bottom staff marked *p* and *f*. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings.

The middle of the composition is defined by a simple, sparser texture where interest is created mainly by the use of octave transposition.

**EXAMPLE 185** (*Loisai*, mm. 65-76)

The musical score for Example 185, measures 65-76, is presented in three systems. Each system consists of three staves: a top staff (likely Clarinet), a middle staff (likely Bass Clarinet), and a bottom staff (likely Marimba).  
- **System 1 (Measures 65-66):** The top staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with dynamics *p* and *pp* leading to *f*. There are triplets and accents. The middle staff has rests. The bottom staff has a rhythmic pattern with dynamics *p* and *mar.*.  
- **System 2 (Measures 67-69):** The top staff continues the melodic line with dynamics *p* and *f*. The middle staff has a rhythmic pattern with dynamics *mf*. The bottom staff has a rhythmic pattern with dynamics *f* and *mf*. A snare drum part is indicated with 'x' marks and dynamics *p* and *mf*.  
- **System 3 (Measures 70-72):** The top staff has a melodic line with dynamics *p* and *ff*. The middle staff has a rhythmic pattern with dynamics *p* and *ff*. The bottom staff has a rhythmic pattern with dynamics *p* and *ff*. A marimba part is indicated with 'x' marks and dynamics *p* and *ff*.  
The score includes various musical notations such as clefs, key signatures, time signatures, dynamics (*p*, *pp*, *f*, *mf*, *ff*), articulation (accents, slurs), and performance instructions like '(cym.)' and '(mar.)'.

In another particularly interesting texture, the marimba has an ostinato figure while the bass clarinet weaves its melody through the ostinato.

**EXAMPLE 186** (*Loisai*, m. 32)



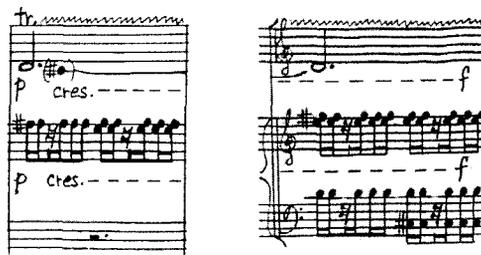
As can be seen in this excerpt, the entire range of the bass clarinet is explored and the beautiful dissonances created by the C naturals (concert pitch) of measures 49 and 50 break the monotony of the C# minor tonality.

**EXAMPLE 187** (*Loisai*, mm. 47-53)



Although the use of color in *Loisai* is most prominent in relation to the repeated single notes and small clusters, as well as the auxiliary percussion parts, in this unique passage color seems to be the driving force since the close spacing of bass notes (B, C, and C#) is not seen in the rest of the piece.

**EXAMPLE 188** (*Loisai*, m. 25)



The work is tonally diverse and unified through the use of rhythm, short motives, and the pitch E.

### *Eco Para Un Grito Gris*

The development of musical materials in the marimba solo *Eco Para Un Grito Gris* seems to derive from a dramatic narrative between four main musical gestures, which are distinct in character, rather than from rhythmic or melodic motives. These four gestures are all introduced in the first page of the score. The first gesture is a rhythmic one involving repeated notes and the characteristics of syncopated dance rhythms. Gesture two is a rhapsodic one appearing either as an *accelerando* from slow to very fast, as a *glissandi*, or as a metered fast run of notes. The third gesture appears in the form of a rolled chorale that is gentle and harmonic. The final gesture is contrapuntal and at times can be harmonically daring.

The harmonic vocabulary is centered around secundal and quartal harmonies. In fact at the very first bar of the piece the most important intervals are introduced: P5, P4, and M2. In bar three another important interval, the M9, is used. Tonally, the piece seems to start around C Major although the E natural only appears briefly as part of an upward *glissando* in bar two. In bar three, the accidentals Ab and Bb redirect the listener's sense of tonality but the A natural in bar four does not help in establishing a tonal center. A Db in bar nine once again moves the harmony toward F Minor. The C Minor tonality does seem to resurface in bars eleven and twelve but it is quickly destroyed by the Gb in bar thirteen. The harmonic movement of *Eco Para Un Grito Gris* seems to derive more from local intervallic relationships and a narrative involving musical gestures than from a tonal design.

EXAMPLE 189 (*Eco Para un Grito Gris*, mm. 1-17)

ECO PARA UN GRITO GRIS  
(FOR MARIMBA)

WILLIAM ORTIZ

(para Orlando Cottó)

Marimba

$\text{♩} = 82$

gliss.

Terminando

GESTURE 1

1 2 3 4

Ortiz, as in other works, makes ample use of octave displacement to explore different colors of the five-octave instrument and to create new textures as well. In the example below, the rhythmic gesture found in measures 14 and 15 (see above) are recalled near the end of the piece. But this time measure 14 is developed by the addition of a bass line, which has the same rhythm as the main motive in *Rapeo* (see example ?), and measure 15 is transposed an octave in opposite directions in measure 149. The result is a more sonorous, grandiose interpretation of the rhythmic gesture.

**EXAMPLE 190** (*Eco Para un Grito Gris*, mm. 145-149)

Ortiz also uses melodic fragments in diminution as in measure 101 when the top part appears in sixteenth note as opposed to the eight notes of measure 70. The bass part uses the same pitches but is altered rhythmically to accommodate the change of the top part.

**EXAMPLE 191** (*Eco Para un Grito Gris*, mm. 70-71 and 101-102)

In measure 28 both octave displacement and diminution are used at once as a re-interpretation of measures 25 and 26.

**EXAMPLE 192** (*Eco Para un Grito Gris*, mm. 25-28)



Another technique often used by Ortiz is the stacking of pitches from the bottom to the top or vice versa (see *Loaisai* and *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*). That can be seen in measures 21 through 23. It can be argued that the pitch C in measure 22 is an octave transposition of the pitch C in measure 21. That the resultant sonority in measure 23 is founded on quartal harmony can be seen in Ortiz' choice in spelling the lowest note as a Gb instead of F#, which would make the chord a D dominant seventh-chord in first inversion. Also, the increasing dynamic makes this compositional device very effective.

**EXAMPLE 193** (*Eco Para un Grito Gris*, mm. 21-23)



Other similar examples, in an abbreviated form, can be found in measures 40, 93, and 154. Interesting enough, in measure 40 the pitch C is again transposed, but now two octaves lower.

**EXAMPLE 194** (*Eco Para un Grito Gris*, mm. 40, 93, and 154)



While the pitch material is not the primary carrier of development, Ortiz does recall in the contrapuntal passage between measures 34 and 39 the same ambiguity of tonality found at the beginning of the piece. Here the pitches that create instability are D and Db or G and Gb.

**EXAMPLE 195** (*Eco Para un Grito Gris*, mm. 34-39)



Ortiz also superimposes gestures creating new textures. In measures 106, 107, and 108, both the rhythmic gesture (top) and the contrapuntal gesture (bottom) are paired.

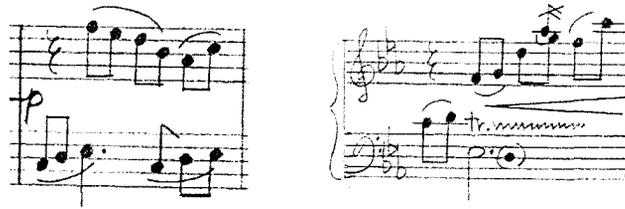
**EXAMPLE 196** (*Eco Para un Grito Gris*, mm. 106-108)



This moving line derives from the bass and treble lines found in measures 11 and 12.

Octave transposition can be seen in both staves as well.

**EXAMPLE 197** (*Eco Para un Grito Gris*, mm. 11-12)



There are two instances in *Eco Para un Grito Gris* where the developed material gains autonomy. The first is a dance-like motive that is introduced in measure 44 and is transposed two octaves down to become a latin bass part in measure 45. The top part of measures 46 and 47 seem to be what a percussionist would play on a cowbell. Both the bass and “cowbell” patterns have a 3-2 clave structure. The same motive, with a slight modification of the top part, is repeated more times starting in measure 87.

**EXAMPLE 198** (*Eco Para un Grito Gris*, mm. 44-46)



The second is a syncopated triadic figure. It first appears in measure 75 and is transposed an octave lower in measure 76 to become another bass part. Measures 76 and 77 are interesting because the right hand has black keys only while the left white keys. The white-key pattern continues in the following measures in opposite directions.

**EXAMPLE 199** (*Eco Para un Grito Gris*, mm. 75-80)





A similar passage happens between measures 129 and 132.

The formal organization of *Eco Para un Grito Gris* is very fragmented and, therefore, relies on the recognition of the distinct profile of each gesture. This fragmentation, however, is organic and the gestures seem to affect each other as the piece unfolds.

## *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*

*Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines* is one of very few large-scale compositions in the solo timpani repertoire. Although there are no pitch changes for most of the composition, Ortiz is able to maintain energy and interest for eleven minutes by exploring the musical potential of these four drums. The use of contrasting durations, tempi, and dynamics, plus the use of rolls and glissandi make *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines* a very expressive composition.

### EXAMPLE 200 (*Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*, mm. 25-39)

The musical score for Example 200 consists of two staves of music. The top staff begins with a tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 108$  and an *accel.* instruction. The bottom staff begins with a tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 48$  and a *rit.* instruction. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *p*, *f*, *mp*, and *pp*, as well as articulation marks like *staccato* and *legato*. The music features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic shading.

The use of rests and *staccato* and *legato* articulations are very effective and particularly important in bringing out the lyrical and dramatic qualities of the instrument.

### EXAMPLE 201 (*Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*, mm. 40-52)

The musical score for Example 201 consists of two staves of music. The top staff begins with a tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 72$  and a *trm.* instruction. The bottom staff begins with a tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 72$  and a *trm.* instruction. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, *mf*, and *f*, as well as articulation marks like *staccato* and *legato*. The music features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic shading.

Dynamic shadings create complex textures not readily visible in the score. For example, in the passage below the use of crescendo followed by a *piano* marking or a new crescendo create layers of sound capitalizing on the natural resonance of the timpani.

**EXAMPLE 202** (*Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*, mm. 53-78)



Other textures are more obvious but still very challenging for the performer. Especially the polyrhythmic ones where the clarity of the lines depends on a refined sense of independent phrasings.

**EXAMPLE 203** (*Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*, mm. 180-185)



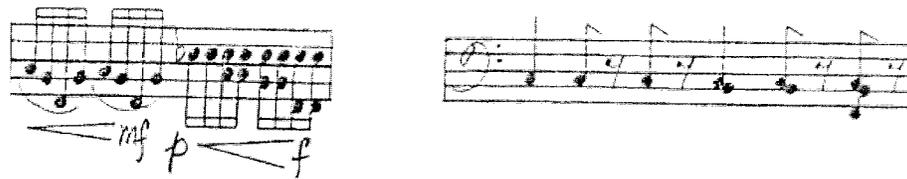
Above all, it is a reliance on the sound of the instrument itself, particularly its rich resonance, that makes Ortiz' composition so idiomatic. In this fast passage, for example, the timpanist virtually plays a four-note chord that is staggered from the low F to the high Eb. Because the lowest three drums are the most resonant, their pitches (F, B, and C) continue to vibrate while the pitch Eb is articulated until the end. The effect is a beautiful fading out with the Eb following, through the diminuendo, the gradual decay of the other pitches.

**EXAMPLE 204** (*Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*, mm. 202-204)



In this other passage, Ortiz again incorporates the use of stacked pitches even though the timpanist has obvious limitations. The resonance of the low drums and the sequential entrances of the each drum are what make it possible for Ortiz' technique to work. At other instances, Ortiz actually writes three pitches requiring the timpanist to pick up a third mallet.

**EXAMPLE 205** (*Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*, mm. )



One of the first noticeable elements of structure in *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines* is the different tempi demarking smaller and larger sections. Some of these changes are immediate while others are preceded by an *accelerando* or *ritardando*.

q =63 accel. q =108 rit. q =48 q =72 rit. q =52 q. =120

Equally important to the form of the composition, however, are the changes of musical character preceding or following these tempo changes. For example, in measure 50 a triplet figure is introduced and very soon comes to dominate the next section of the piece that transitions from a simple meter to a compound meter while keeping the same tempo. At first that change is subtle, but after some time the listener cannot avoid noticing that the music has indeed moved to a new rhythmic plane. One could refer to this passage around measure 66 as an enharmonic-rhythm modulation just as modulations of harmony can happen through the use of enharmonic chords (see Example 202). There is a transition back to the simple meter but the motivic material is from the very beginning of

the composition at a faster tempo. In other words, while the tempo changes are important to the formal plan of the composition they are not the only markers of change.

**EXAMPLE 206** (*Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*, mm. 116-133)



The motives are of significance but they too are fragile substance in determining the form because they are very short and constantly changing. Their musical profile is very strong, on the other hand, assuring that the memory is able recognize intuitively common musical gestures. The score analysis below takes into consideration important motives, distinct gestures, tempo changes, metric changes, character changes. The complex interplay between all of these elements is what gives the composition depth of expression.



Handwritten musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system has two staves, and the second system has two staves. The music includes various dynamics (p, mp, mf, f, pp), articulation (accents), and performance markings like "trm. vivace" and "trm. moderato". There are also circled numbers (1, 1a, 1b) and boxed letters (A, B) indicating specific sections or measures.

This image shows a handwritten musical score for a piano piece, consisting of four systems of staves. The notation includes various dynamics (p, mf, f, mp), articulation (accents), and performance markings like "tr. trem." and circled numbers (1, 2).

The first system consists of two staves. The upper staff begins with a piano (p) dynamic and features a trill marked "tr. trem.". The lower staff starts with a piano (p) dynamic and includes circled numbers 1 and 2. Dynamics range from p to mf.

The second system also consists of two staves. The upper staff starts with a piano (p) dynamic and includes circled numbers 1 and 2. Dynamics range from p to mp. The lower staff begins with a piano (p) dynamic and includes circled numbers 1 and 2. Dynamics range from p to mp.

The third system consists of two staves. The upper staff starts with a piano (p) dynamic and includes circled numbers 1 and 2. Dynamics range from p to f. The lower staff begins with a piano (p) dynamic and includes circled numbers 1 and 2. Dynamics range from p to mp.

The fourth system consists of two staves. The upper staff starts with a piano (p) dynamic and includes circled numbers 1 and 2. Dynamics range from p to mp. The lower staff begins with a piano (p) dynamic and includes circled numbers 1 and 2. Dynamics range from p to mp.

Handwritten musical score for piano, consisting of five systems of staves. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, notes, rests, and various dynamic markings such as *ppp*, *mp*, *f*, *mf*, and *p*. Performance instructions include *from...* and *trm...*. The score features several circled first endings (1), second endings (2), and a section labeled (B). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. The piece concludes with a final circled first ending (1A).

This is a handwritten musical score for guitar, consisting of several staves. The notation includes complex rhythmic patterns, often with multiple beams and accents. Dynamics are marked throughout, including *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *f* (forte). Performance instructions such as "Mit. A. Trem." (with tremolo) and "Trem. assai" (tremolo assai) are present. The score includes tempo markings:  $\text{♩} = 52$  and  $\text{♩} = 120$ . There are also various fingering numbers (1-6) and circled letters (A, B) indicating specific techniques or sections. The notation is dense and characteristic of a guitar-specific manuscript.

The image displays a handwritten musical score for piano, consisting of five systems of staves. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The dynamics used are *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *f* (forte), and *pp* (pianissimo). Performance markings include *mf* and *f* hairpins, and circled numbers (1, 2, 3) indicating specific measures or sections. A boxed section labeled 'A' is present in the third system. The score is written in a cursive, handwritten style.

This is a handwritten musical score for a piano piece, consisting of five systems of staves. The notation is dense and includes various dynamics and performance markings.

- System 1:** Starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The notation includes sixteenth and thirty-second notes, with some slurs and accents.
- System 2:** Features a forte (*f*) dynamic. It includes a triplet of eighth notes and several circled markings labeled '1a' and '2a'.
- System 3:** Continues with a forte (*f*) dynamic. It includes a section marked 'From *accanto* in this *ritardando*' with a wavy line above the staff, and a circled '1a' marking.
- System 4:** Shows a piano (*p*) dynamic. It includes a circled '1a' marking and a section with a wavy line above the staff.
- System 5:** Ends with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. It includes a circled '1a' marking and a section with a wavy line above the staff.

Henry J. Alford  
 10/19/87  
 (approx. 11')

The overall form of *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines* defies a clear-cut definition since sections overlap with each other, and the changes of tempo, meter, and musical material do not happen at the same time. A possible formal design, based on time feels, could be the following:

mm. 1-49	50-125	126-197	198-222	223-264
A (duple feel)	B (triple feel)	A' (duple with some triple)	B' (triple)	A' (duple)

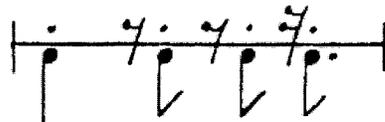
There are three other aspects that at first seem to have an enigmatic role in *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*. The first is at the very beginning of the piece where the player is instructed to cover with a piece of cloth (*coperti*) the head of the lowest and highest drums for two measures only. The player also uses wooden sticks for the first fifteen measures of the piece and is never asked to use them again. The timbre of these sounds is highly contrasting with the rest of the work and creates an uncertainty of purpose. The second enigmatic element is found throughout the piece. The player is required four times (in measures 43, 102, 195, and 200) to pick up a third timpani mallet in order to play a three-note chord, which overall is of a very subtle effect. The third enigmatic moment happens at the very end of the piece when an unexpected tuning change, through upward glissandi, takes place. The rhythmic and motivic material is familiar to the listener but the new pitches (A, B, F, and A) come as a surprise after approximately nine minutes of the same pitch material. In reality, these events are perfect examples of Ortiz' ingenuity in establishing through coloristic effects a unique way to begin and end a composition, which relates to his interest in new forms in music.

## *Rapeo*

In the snare drum solo *Rapeo*, Ortiz explores different colors and textures by approaching the instrument in a non-traditional manner almost as if the drum was a set of timbales (two drums). For example, he assigns the top line to the right hand and the bottom line to the left hand. The performer must bring out independent lines on the single drum by means of different dynamics, colors, articulations and placement of sticks on the head of the drum. The sound palette is expanded by the use of brushes, rim shots played solo or against the ordinary head sound, snares turned on and off, a single stroke roll with brushes, and even a trill on the sides of the drum (in timbale playing the percussionist often uses the sides of the drum to play traditional patterns such as the *cascara*). Ortiz clearly treats the snare drum as an instrument capable of playing monophonic, polyphonic, and homophonic textures.

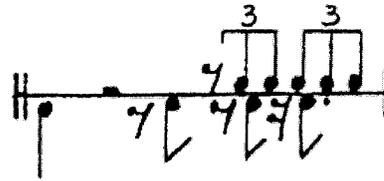
*Rapeo* is a good example of a concise composition with many characteristics of Ortiz' style. Ten basic rhythmic motives are used throughout the piece mostly in contrapuntal fashion. The piece starts out with a short introduction of two bars establishing the 4/4 meter. In bar three motive 1, the “rap” motive, is introduced by itself on the left hand. The contrast of color and articulation is immediately noticeable; marked staccato with sticks (snares off) as opposed to let it vibrate with brushes (snares on) of bar one.

### **EXAMPLE 208** (*Rapeo*, m. 3)



In bar five motive 2, a five-note triplet rhythm, is set against motive 1.

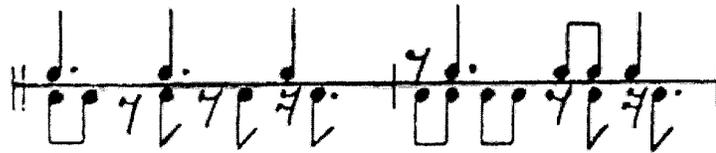
**EXAMPLE 209** (*Rapeo*, m. 5)



In bar thirteen motive 3, a two-bars long motive, is set against variations of motive 1.

Motive 3 is a cross-rhythm based on groupings of three eighth notes ending with two eighth notes and a quarter note.

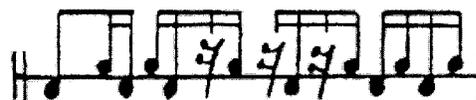
**EXAMPLE 210** (*Rapeo*, m. 13-14)



In bar sixteen the same motive appears but it is interrupted by motive 2 in bar seventeen.

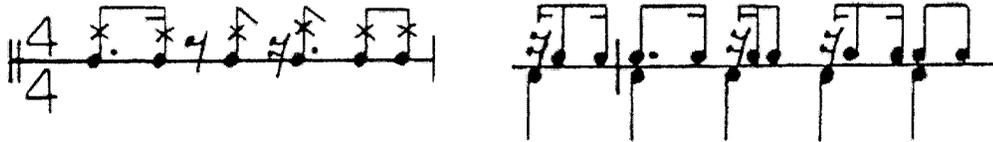
In bar fifteen two half note triplets appear; it is labeled as motive 10 because it is of no immediate influence until later in the composition. A fermata separates the first section of the composition from the second. In bar eighteen, a different texture is created by the use of a new motive split between the hands. This motive (motive 4) is similar in character to motive 1 and, therefore, it could be called the second rap motive; but it also shares the characteristics of syncopated Latin American rhythms.

**EXAMPLE 211** (*Rapeo*, m. 18)



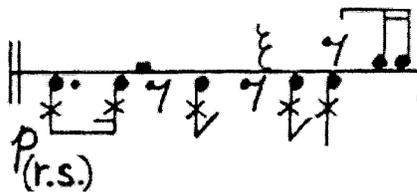
Bars twenty, twenty-one, twenty-four, twenty-five, part of twenty-six and twenty-eighth seem to be fragmentations and variations of motive four. Motives 5 and 6 are important because they seem to relate more to the cross rhythms of Latin American music.

**EXAMPLE 212** (*Rapeo*, mm. 22 and 27)



In fact, from bar thirty to thirty-four the music seems to resist the change to a Latin feel so clearly evident in the following measures. Because in bar thirty-five the *clave* motive played with soft rim shots, motive 7, is undeniably Latin American. It seems relevant to point out that this choice of timbre, the same used for motive 5 in bar 22, reinforces the idea that the *clave* rhythm and cross-rhythms are closely related in Ortiz' music.

**EXAMPLE 213** (*Rapeo*, m. 35)



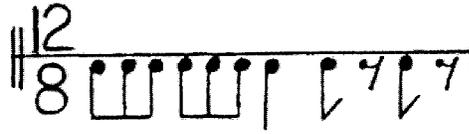
Motive 8, the *cáscara*, is also related to the *clave*, it is also played with rim shots, and it is set against motive 2 and motive 3.

**EXAMPLE 214** (*Rapeo*, m. 38)



In bar forty-three motive 9, the Afro-Caribbean motive, seems to be the natural development of motives 2 and 10. Motive 2 even appears in bars forty-four and forty-five, and motive 10 in bar forty-six, against motive 9.

**EXAMPLE 215** (*Rapeo*, m. 43)



Between bars fifty-one and sixty-four the music switches intermittently between the Anglo (motive 4) and Latin (motive 8) motives. The homophonic texture is marked by the quarter-note accompaniment of the left hand. Motive 8 becomes prominent at the end of the section and is set against motives 2 and 3. Another fermata separates the ending from the middle section.

The final section of *Rapeo* starts with motive 1 and ends with both hands playing the motive loudly. With the exception of motives 7 and 8, all other motives appear in the last section of the piece. Ortiz' technique of superimposed motives coupled with the use of different tempi and timbres, *accelerando* and *rallentando* make it a challenge in perceiving a clear formal design. A possible interpretation of the structure would prioritize the use of motive 1, the main idea for the composition, and the fermatas:

A	B (Developmental)	A'
mm. 1-17	mm. 18-64	mm. 65-86

Another possibility would be to prioritize the introduction of groups of motives:

Intro.	A	B	Transition	C	Dev.	D
mm. 1-2	motives 1, 2, and 3	motives 4, 5, and 6	mm. 30-34	motives 7, 8, 9	mm. 49-64	recap.

The "recapitulation," in the last section, where almost all motives are brought back, is quite unique in the context of polyphonic percussion music and very similar in concept to the fragmented ending of *Graffiti Nuyorican*.



The musical score consists of seven staves of drum notation:

- Staff 1 (Measures 30-34):** Starts with a circled measure number 30. Dynamics include *pp*, *f*, *p*, *mp*, and *mf*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes and a section marked *accel.* and *cres.*
- Staff 2 (Measures 35-38):** Starts with a circled measure number 35. Tempo is  $\text{♩} = 134$  (snare off). Dynamics include *f*, *p* (r.s.), and *mf*. Includes a circled measure number 10 and circled measure numbers 7, 7, 7.
- Staff 3 (Measures 39-41):** Starts with a circled measure number 39. Dynamics include *p* (r.s.) and *mf*. Includes circled measure numbers 13, 8, 8, 8.
- Staff 4 (Measures 42-45):** Starts with a circled measure number 42. Includes a trill marked *f* (on sides) and a section marked *mf*. Includes circled measure numbers 12, 9, 9, 9.
- Staff 5 (Measures 46-50):** Starts with a circled measure number 46. Dynamics include *f* and *p*. Includes circled measure numbers 15, 9, 9, 9. Tempo is  $\text{♩} = 82$  (snare on). Includes a section marked *rall.*
- Staff 6 (Measures 51-54):** Starts with a circled measure number 51. Includes the instruction "(wirebrushes)". Dynamics include *p*. Includes a circled measure number 4c.
- Staff 7 (Measures 55-58):** Starts with a circled measure number 55. Dynamics include *mf*. Includes a section marked *accel.* and a circled measure number 4c. Tempo is  $\text{♩} = 106$ .

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Handwritten musical score for a percussion instrument, likely a woodstick, spanning measures 57 to 83. The score includes various rhythmic patterns, dynamics (mf, p, f, ff), and performance instructions like "accel." and "(woodsticks)". It features numerous triplets and slurs, with circled measure numbers and fingerings.

57  $\text{mf}$   $\text{p}$   $\text{mf}$

63 *accel.*  $\text{p}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{p}$  *accel.* (woodsticks)

67  $\text{f}$   $\text{mf}$   $\text{p}$  r.s.

71  $\text{f}$   $\text{p}$

75  $\text{f}$   $\text{p}$

79  $\text{f}$   $\text{p}$

83  $\text{f}$   $\text{p}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{p}$   $\text{ff}$

*Gilley*  
*Ortiz-Alvarado*  
7/13/88

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## *Tamboleo*

Cross-rhythms are of structural importance in the multiple percussion solo *Tamboleo*. Because these cross-rhythms are used extensively throughout the piece they create a truly polyrhythmic texture, unlike the isolated or occasional use of polyrhythms in most of the other compositions. After the short three-measure vocal introduction, the percussionist plays four bars that resemble the *clave*.

### EXAMPLE 217 (*Tamboleo*, mm. 4-7)

♩ = 144

CONGA  
TENOR DRUM  
SNARE DRUM  
BASS DRUM

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

The three-note asymmetric figure of measures four and six are given continuity gradually until they become uninterrupted in the middle of measure nine. This cross-rhythm in one hand outlines a 3/8 meter, while the other hand and foot bass drum continue to play in 4/4. The performer must be careful to keep the phrasing of the changing part (4/4) independent from the accompaniment (3/8).

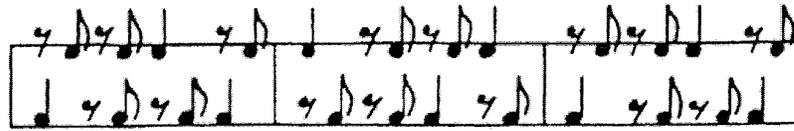
### EXAMPLE 218 (*Tamboleo*, mm. 12-16)

*mp*

In measures twenty-four and thirty-seven there are brief interruptions that are actually helpful in reestablishing the contrast of rhythmic frameworks being used. In the middle of measure thirty-seven the cross-rhythm is “embellished” with an extra note, which



**EXAMPLE 221** (*Tamboleo*, mm. 177-179)



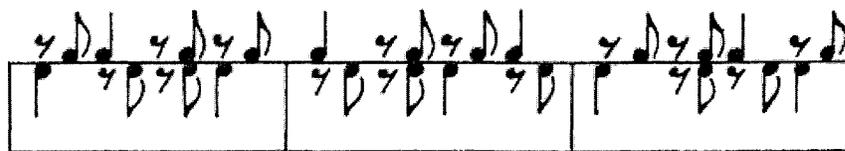
The new ostinato is also set against the 3/8 ostinato between bars 182-185.

**EXAMPLE 222** (*Tamboleo*, mm. 183-185)



And, briefly, against the regular 3/4 ostinato between bars 186-188.

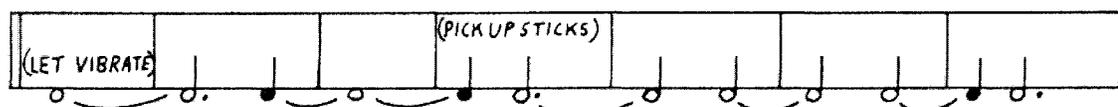
**EXAMPLE 223** (*Tamboleo*, mm. 186-188)



Musically speaking, these are the most difficult measures of the composition. In fact the music seems to “break down” abruptly and the very slow section played with fingers returns briefly. The last section of *Tamboleo* pushes the performer’s technique to the limit because of its extremely fast tempo ( $q=208$ ). The tempo change is not abrupt but built note by note as a notated accelerando in the bass drum while the performer picks up sticks once again.

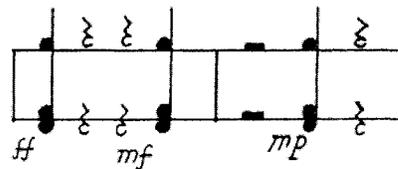
**EXAMPLE 224** (*Tamboleo*, mm. 205-211)

$\text{♩} = 208$



The polyrhythmic texture is again prominent until measure 241 when a cross rhythm (an augmentation of that on measure four) creates new tension. In fact, it is responsible for the only change of (notated) meter in the composition, between measures 253-261. This cross-rhythm is heard two more times in measures 270-271 and 279-280.

**EXAMPLE 225** (*Tamboleo*, mm. 241-242)



A possible formal design for *Tamboleo* could be based on the tempo changes:

Introduction	A	A'	B	A''	B'	A'''
mm. 1-3	4-75	76-150	151-163	164-199	200-204	205-281

Another formal design could follow the use of the cross-rhythms:

Introduction	A	B	Dev.	A'	Trans.	B'
mm. 1-9	9- 37	37-63	63-111	112-144	145-163	164-188
Trans.	Coda	A'' & B''	Coda			
189-215	241-281	216-240 & 230-236	241-281			

What makes it difficult to determine the structure of the composition, like in other of his compositions, is that sections overlap with each other and the changes within sections do not necessarily coincide with the tempo changes.



Handwritten musical score for a single melodic line, measures 35-80. The score includes dynamic markings (mf, mp, f, p), articulation marks (accents, slurs), and performance instructions like "3 OR 4" and "J=152". Measure numbers 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 70, and 80 are clearly marked. The notation features eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and various fingerings.

Musical score for a piano piece, measures 85-150. The score is written on a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. It features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes. Dynamics range from piano (*p*) to forte (*f*). Performance markings include fingerings (circled numbers), slurs, and accents. Measure numbers 85, 90, 95, 100, 105, 110, 115, 120, 125, and 130 are indicated. The piece concludes with a final chord marked *(P)*.

This is a handwritten musical score for a percussion instrument, likely a snare drum, spanning measures 135 to 175. The score is written on a single staff with a 2/4 time signature. It includes various rhythmic patterns, dynamics, and performance instructions.

- Measures 135-140:** Starts with a *p* dynamic. The notation shows a series of eighth notes with accents. Circled numbers 1A, 2A, and 3A are placed above the notes.
- Measures 141-145:** Continues the rhythmic pattern. A circled number 1 is placed above the notes.
- Measures 146-150:** A section marked *pp* (pianissimo) with the instruction "(WITH FINGERS)". The tempo is marked  $\text{♩} = 66$ . The notation shows a series of eighth notes.
- Measures 151-155:** A section marked *f* (forte). The tempo is marked  $\text{♩} = 176$ . The notation shows a series of eighth notes with accents. A circled number 1A is placed above the notes.
- Measures 156-160:** A section marked *f* (forte) with the instruction "WITH STICKS". The notation shows a series of eighth notes with accents. A circled number 1 is placed above the notes.
- Measures 161-165:** A section marked *mf* (mezzo-forte). The notation shows a series of eighth notes with accents. A circled number 1 is placed above the notes.
- Measures 166-170:** A section marked *mf* (mezzo-forte). The notation shows a series of eighth notes with accents. A circled number 1 is placed above the notes.
- Measures 171-175:** A section marked *mf* (mezzo-forte). The notation shows a series of eighth notes with accents. A circled number 1 is placed above the notes.

The score is heavily annotated with circled numbers (1, 1A, 2A, 3A) and letters (A, B) placed above the notes, likely indicating specific techniques or accents. Slanted lines are drawn above the notes in several places, possibly indicating accents or specific playing techniques.



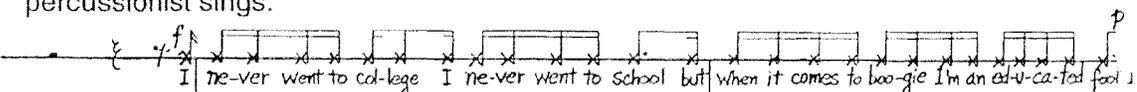
Musical score for a piano piece, measures 240-280. The score is written on a grand staff with two staves per system. It includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings (mp, mf, f, ff, p). Performance instructions like "(WITH STICKS)", "(SIMILE)", and "(WITH PEDAL)" are present. Measure numbers 240, 245, 250, 255, 260, 265, 270, and 280 are clearly marked. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a fermata.

## *Urbanización*

*Urbanización*, another composition for multiple percussion, is very different from *Tamboleo*. The small set-up of *Tamboleo* allows the percussionist to handle the two or three independent parts rather comfortably. *Urbanización*, on the other hand, is almost an ensemble piece for one player because not only there are eleven instruments in the set-up but also these are treated polyphonically, homophonically, and monophonically. While in *Tamboleo* he deals with cross-rhythmic patterns and polyrhythmic textures that are strikingly similar to traditional ones, the context is more abstract and does not make direct references to traditional sources. In *Urbanización*, by contrast, the rhythms from the street are present and play a prominent role in the composition. In addition to important rhythmic motives such as the *clave*, the *cáscara*, and the hemiola motive, many other syncopated patterns develop in the course of the piece. Some of these rhythms derive from the vocalized graffiti that, according to Ortiz, is “the source material from which the rhythmic structure of the entire work emanates.” The first of these is quite simple rhythmically and makes reference to the collective knowledge and memory, and the innate musicianship of the Latino musician.

### **EXAMPLE 227** (*Urbanización*, mm. 44-45)

(meno mosso)  
percussionist sings: \*



The musical notation shows a vocal line on a single staff. Above the staff, the tempo is marked '(meno mosso)' and the instruction 'percussionist sings: \*' is given. The lyrics are: 'I ne-ver went to col-lege I ne-ver went to school but when it comes to boo-gie I'm an ed-u-ca-ted fool'. The melody is simple, with notes aligned with the lyrics. Above the notes, there are rhythmic markings: a vertical line with a crossbar (likely a quarter note), followed by a series of 'x' marks indicating syncopated rhythms. The first 'x' is on the first beat, and subsequent 'x' marks are on the second and third beats of each measure. The piece ends with a fermata and a dynamic marking 'p'.

The second part of the text, clearly more syncopated, serves as living proof of the sophisticated rhythmic sensibility of the street musician.

**EXAMPLE 228** (*Urbanización*, mm. 50-53)

Musical score for Example 228, measures 50-53. The score includes vocal lines and percussion parts. The vocal lines are labeled CB, CYM, SN, TT, BD, BGS, CGS, and TIMP. The lyrics are: "toy toy toy toy boogie back toy toy toy toy sha-bu toy toy toy toy sha-bu toy toy toy toy I". The percussion parts are represented by stems and flags on a grand staff.

The vocalized graffiti can sometimes be easily identifiable in the music although, in this particular example, the pick up note is missing and the second and third beats of bar 67 are varied slightly.

**EXAMPLE 229** (*Urbanización*, mm. 66-67)

Musical score for Example 229, measures 66-67. The score shows a two-bar structure with dynamic markings. The first bar is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic, and the second bar is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score includes vocal lines and percussion parts. The percussion parts are represented by stems and flags on a grand staff.

At other instances, slight variations make that recognition more challenging, especially when the two-bar structure is obscured because of phrase extension or fragmentation.



The virtuosic, highly syncopated passage between measures 120 and 140 is one of the most challenging in the piece and requires great rhythmic and dynamic control, fluidity, and independence from the percussionist. It derives from this nursery rhyme. The syncopated motive of the third line is the same main motive of *Loisai* and, again, similar to the seventh Afro-Cuban rhythmic cell provided by author Fernando Ortiz.

**EXAMPLE 233** (*Urbanización*, mm. 122-132)

The third vocalized graffiti is again in 4/4 with a distinctly Caribbean, syncopated rhythm being outlined. In fact, with the exception of one note, bar three would be the Afro-Cuban rhythmic cell three: the *cinquillo*.

**EXAMPLE 234** (*Urbanización*, mm. 189-192)

The rests at the end of the first, second, and fourth bars are strategically placed so that Ortiz can develop the music while retaining the rhythmic profile of the vocalized graffiti. That is clearly seen in the measures immediately following it.

**EXAMPLE 235** (*Urbanización*, mm. 193-198)

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

The musical score consists of six staves. Above the staves are six bracketed empty boxes. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, rests, and dynamic markings such as *mf*, *mp*, *p*, *f*, and *ord.*. There are also performance instructions like "(on crown)" and "ord." with a checkmark. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

Like in *Bembé*, *Palm Tree in Spanish Figurines*, and *Rapeo*, the role of street drumming in *Urbanización* is of great importance. The importance of dance rhythms and the change between simple to compound meter reflects a common device in traditional Latin American music to create interest and develop musical ideas.

## *Bembé*

Of all compositions for percussion by Ortiz *Bembé* is the most closely associated with the drumming traditions of Latin America and the street drumming of Latinos in New York. The importance of improvisation is also unique in his percussion catalogue. The quartet ensemble utilizes Latin American instruments only; seven congas, two sets of bongos, timbales, cowbell, claves, and guiro; and all players are given opportunities to improvise at some point in the composition on congas, bongos, and timbales. However, the nature of the improvisation is somewhat dictated by the composer because Ortiz often initiates the improvisation for each player and lets them come up with the rest.

### **EXAMPLE 236** (*Bembé*, mm. 134-146)

The image shows a musical score for three percussion instruments: Congas, Cencerro, and Timbales. The Congas part is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. It features a complex, syncopated rhythmic pattern with various note values and rests. The Cencerro and Timbales parts are represented by empty staves, indicating that they are to be improvised by the performers. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

The use of syncopated patterns and cross rhythms written out by the composer suggests that a knowledge of this rhythmic vocabulary is of great help to the performer and important for the success of the composition. For example, in this conga solo Ortiz stresses the asymmetry of Latin American improvisation by repeating three times a syncopated pattern (Afro-Cuban cell #1), which starts in the middle of the bar. That is followed by a cross-rhythm also starting and ending in the middle of the bar.

**EXAMPLE 237** (*Bembé*, mm. 259-267)

The image shows three staves of musical notation. Above the staves, there are rhythmic symbols: a square bracket containing a vertical bar, followed by a vertical bar with a double bar line, another vertical bar with a double bar line, and a vertical bar with a double bar line and a '3/8' time signature. The notation on the staves consists of rhythmic patterns, including eighth notes and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together. The first staff has a treble clef, and the second and third staves have bass clefs.

Peter Manuel has contributed to the creation of an aesthetic of Latin music improvisation by describing some of the basic elements present in the repertoire. He says in relation to those three percussion instruments that have improvisatory roles in salsa (the same improvising instruments in Ortiz' *Bembé*):

...the solo styles associated with the three instruments [congas, bongos, and timbales] are quite similar, drawing from a common vocabulary of motives and devices. Accordingly, most modern percussionists learn to perform on two or three of the instruments, using many of the same principles and techniques. Some of these are evident in the bongo solo schematically transcribed as example 6.4. Brief as this solo is, it exhibits some quintessential features of the *típico* idiom, including the emphasis on artful syncopation rather than gratuitous speed and virtuosity; the tendency—as pervasive in West African drumming as in the solos of *charanga* flautist Dave Valentín—to establish a given phrase that can be repeated (with or without variation) a few times, and then move to another discrete phrase; and lastly, the sequential use of contrasting syncopations, particularly different articulations of either ternary phrasings of binary subdivisions, or, conversely, binary phrasing of triplets. In this case, the solo quickly progresses through the following phrases: ternary-phrased single strokes (mm. 1-3); reiterations of a four- or five-stroke sextuplet figure (mm. 4-6); an extended series of regular triplet strokes (mm. 11-13); and lastly, a stock phrase consisting of threefold repetition of a pattern with ternary phrasing of binary subdivision (such as could be schematized: **1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6** etc.), all in eighth-notes (mm. 15-17).

Omitted from this and other transcriptions in this article are the numerous and subtle microrhythmic nuances (playing 'behind the beat,' straddling triplet and quadratic subdivisions, and the like) which can be judiciously introduced (and perhaps subsequently avoided) in all instrumental styles in order to heighten rhythmic drive and tension.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Manuel, *Improvisation in Latin Dance Music*, 138-9.

**EXAMPLE 238** (Manuel's transcription of bongo solo by Carlos Embale)

Example 6.4. Carlos Embale, bongo solo on "Los rumberos de La Habana," *Soneros Mayores*, EGREM PRO-067.

Resonating with Manuel's description of a Latin American improvisation, Ortiz' written out rhythms adhere to that tradition of popular and traditional music. Also in *Bembé*, player two has solos on bongo and congas, which amplifies Manuel's argument.

The use of percussion with vocals and the name of *santería* divinities also bring to mind the sound of Afro-Caribbean ritual music with its rich polyrhythmic textures. At the beginning of the piece the phrase structure is unique in its tight, asymmetrical organization: player one has a four-bar phrase in 6/8, player two has a seven-bar phrase in 6/8, player three has a two-bar phrase in 2/4, and player four has a seven-bar phrase in 6/8 but starting one measure later than the other parts. This apparent lack of coordination between the parts is balanced by the unison change of dynamics. This ingenious construction allows the listener to recognize that there is structure to the music and to recognize the repetition of patterns by each player although the relationship between the parts is obscured by the rather long asymmetrical seven-bar phrases.



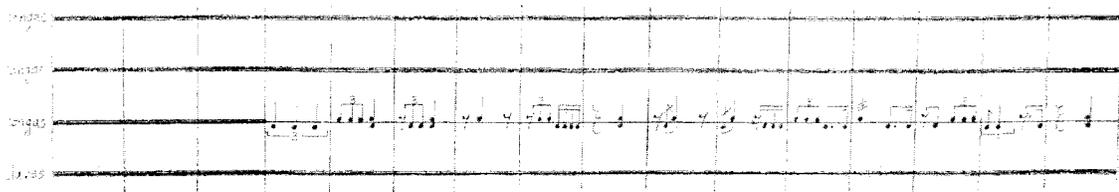
The structure of *Bembé* revolves around distinct rhythmic styles that seem to develop spontaneously throughout the composition. While the transition between these styles sounds quite natural, there is a rather interesting transition between styles in measure 246. The music suddenly stops by the use of a fermata as if the performers get tired of that groove and decide to explore a new one. A drastic change of color takes place with the guiro replacing the cowbell as the main carrier of the rhythm. The change is also marked by a new player improvising in the new section.

**EXAMPLE 242** (*Bembé*, mm. 333-252)



Like in much Afro-Caribbean music, there is an almost irresistible attraction between duple and triple time feels that develop throughout the composition, sometimes focus is given to one or the other or even to both at the same time. This is a unique trait of Latin American music and is expressed by Ortiz both in the form of time signature changes; for example, from 2/4 to 6/8 or vice versa. Or through the constant change between duple and triple rhythmic inflections that, even though very subtle at times, is crucial to the expressivity of Latin American music.

**EXAMPLE 243** (*Bembé*, mm. 443-462)



The following table is an attempt to chart the organization of materials and the formal design of this extended composition for Latin American instruments:

<i>Style</i>	Santería-like				Salsa-like	Afro-Caribbean	Salsa-like	Afro-Caribbean
<b>Form</b>	Introduction	A	A'	A''	B	C	B	C
<b>Measure</b>	1-5	6-56	57-90	91-112	113-187	188-263	264-282	283-341
<b>Tempo</b>	q=112	q.=138	q=96	accel.	q=138		fermata	
<b>Meter</b>	6/8	6/8 (2/4)	2/4			6/8	2/4 (3/4)	6/8
<b>Improvisation</b>					Bongo Timbales	Conga	Bongo Conga	

<i>Style</i>		Bomba	Salsa-like		Santería-like	Salsa-like	
<b>Form</b>	Intro.	D	B	transition	A	B	Coda
<b>Measure</b>	342-346	347-426	427-474	475-500	501-546	547-688	689-703
<b>Tempo</b>		q=112 (accel.)	q=138	fermata			
<b>Meter</b>		2/4		2/4 (6/8)	6/8 (2/4)	2/4	
<b>Improvisation</b>		Congas 1, 2, & 3	Conga 3			Timbales Bongo 3 Conga 1	

Through the different styles of *Bembé* Ortiz expresses his ability to both recall a familiar popular music sound and to create new ones from these.

## 124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.

According to Ortiz, *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.* is a music-theater piece that can be narrated in English or Spanish and the “narrator should express emotion and get involved in the meaning of the text but should not over do it.”<sup>121</sup> Additionally, the six percussionists participate actively by not only playing but also singing and acting. While the text’s subjects are somewhat similar to those of *Ghetto*, the context is quite different in that divergent experimental and folkloric musical elements are integrated very successfully not sounding so different from each other. In that way, *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.* shares a special place in Ortiz percussion catalog with *Graffiti Nuyorican* and *Street Music*. Ortiz states, however, that *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.* does not fit easily in any performance context. He says:

I write from the heart, from my personal experience and world. Hopefully my music will connect, communicate and fit into any context. Yes, there could be a piece that may not fit in politically in any context. For example a defying piece like “124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.” for 6 percussionists, electronic tape and narrator, because of its crude and irreverent texts, may not fit in with any conservative audience. But that’s exactly the purpose of the piece, to stir up thoughts.<sup>122</sup>

The first movement of *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.* features Latin American percussive genres played by the ensemble. For example, at the very beginning of the piece, the percussionists enter the stage one by one and perform a Puerto Rican *plena*.

### EXAMPLE 244 (*124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, pg. 1)

The musical score is for a piece titled "Plena" with a tempo of quarter note = 138. It is in 4/4 time and consists of four measures. The score is divided into four parts, each with a descriptive note below it:

- Measure 1:** Conga player walks out on stage to the congas and begins to play. The notation shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.
- Measure 2:** Claves player walks out on stage to the claves and begins to play. The notation shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.
- Measure 3:** Cencerro (cowbell) player walks out on stage to the cencerro and begins to play. The notation shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.
- Measure 4:** Tamborine player walks out on stage to the tamborine and begins to play. The notation shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

Additional markings include "(repeat 4 x)" above the first three measures and dynamic markings of "mp" (mezzo-piano) and "mf" (mezzo-forte) throughout the score.

<sup>121</sup> William Ortiz, *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, performance notes (Unpublished), i.

<sup>122</sup> Ortiz, interview, 13 March 2005.

A *pandereta* improvisation (marked *tamb.*) ensues very appropriately since this is the traditional drum used in this music.

**EXAMPLE 245** (*124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, pg. 1)

The musical score consists of five staves. From top to bottom, they are labeled: Congas, Claves, cenc., tamb., and tape. The Congas and Claves staves use a treble clef and contain rhythmic notation with stems and flags. The cenc. staff uses a different clef and contains rhythmic notation with stems and flags. The tamb. staff uses a different clef and contains rhythmic notation with stems and flags, including a dynamic marking 'f'. The tape staff contains rhythmic notation with stems and flags. A note '(timbale player walks out on stage)' is written below the tamb. staff.

The percussion ensemble provides the musical background that reflects and amplifies the meaning of the text. The *plena* is the music of the common Puerto Rican men and women and often used for protest. In fact, it is often referred to as a “sung newspaper” because of its reliance on topical issues surrounding *barrio* life.<sup>123</sup> The percussionists are even instructed by Ortiz to wear “regular ‘street’ clothes: jeans, t-shirts, etc...” and the narrator is responsible for delivering a poignant criticism of the conditions faced by Puerto Rican immigrants in New York:

To the United States we came to learn how to misspell our name, to lose the definition of pride, to have misfortune on our side, to live where rats and roaches roam in a house that is definitely not a home, to be trained to turn on television sets to dream about jobs you will never get, to fill out welfare applications, to graduate from school without an education, to be drafted, distorted, and destroyed...

The percussion ensemble clearly punctuates the word “destroyed” and is followed by the tape part, which has echoes of Yoruba speech.

<sup>123</sup> Manuel, *Caribbean Currents*, 61.

**EXAMPLE 246** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St., pg. 2)

congas  
claves  
cenc.  
tamb.  
suspended cymbal  
timbales  
tape  
narrator: education to be drafted, distorted and destroyed  
una educación a ser conscriptos deformados y destruidos

(♩=60) 4/20 4/21  
f  
sf  
(laissez vibr)  
Yoruba (echo) Yoruba (echo)

The continuation of the text associates the “slavery” of the past with that of the present: “...to work full time and still be unemployed, to wait for income tax returns and stay drunk and lose concern for the heart and soul of our race.” A musically abstract transition is performed by the percussion ensemble before the next traditional ensemble music is heard.

**EXAMPLE 247** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St., pg. 2)

(♩=60) 1 6 9 12  
congas  
claves  
cenc.  
bongos  
s. cym.  
tiub.

ff (subito) p (subito) ff (subito)  
ff (subito) p (subito) ff (subito)  
f (subito) pp (subito) f (subito)  
ff (subito) p (subito) ff (subito)  
ff (subito) p (subito) ff (subito)

The next dance-like section is a rumba *guaguancó*, the music of black Cubans, which serves as the new background for the narrator, who sarcastically puts the right hand over his heart while pointing out racism in America: “To pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of installment plans, one nation under discrimination for which it stands and which it falls with poverty and injustice for everyone who has the sun on the side of their complexion.”

**EXAMPLE 248** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St., pg. 3)

Bembe (♩=112)

Congas C -  $\xi$  *pp*

Claves C -

Cenc. C -

Bongos C -

The rhythmic richness and complexity of the percussion parts seems to react to the text by showing the abundance of creativity in the immigrant's music.

**EXAMPLE 249** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St., pg. 4)

(♩=60)

Congas

Claves

Cenc.

Bongos

S. Cym.

Timb.

Tape

Ortiz seems to treat the traditional percussion ensemble musics as extended sonoral graffiti that relate to the text and, like in salsa music, to each other. The alternation of these with non-traditional passages is well-balanced and well-connected because Ortiz writes them in a similar vein. As a result, they share similar rhythmic cells and polyrhythmic textures. In fact, sometimes the traditional and the experimental overlap as in the example below. Ortiz superimposes various traditional rhythms, like in *Bembé*, but this time the polyrhythmic effect is non-traditional because of the different tempos in the bongo, cymbal, and timbale parts. The top three instruments play the same rumba *guaguancó* rhythm as in example 248 to which Ortiz adds the Afro-Caribbean, the Cuban *tresillo*, and the Puerto Rican *plena* rhythms.

**EXAMPLE 250** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St., pg. 7)

21"

Congas  
claves  
cenc.  
bongos  
tape

(J=132)  
(J=120)  
(d=138)  
s. cym.  
timb.

(narrator) the next legal paid holiday  
la próxima vacación pagada por ley

In the second movement, the use of the percussion ensemble is very different.

The writing is more abstract calling the ensemble to provide coloristic effects that support the text. The entrances at the beginning of the movement, coordinated with the words “aching” and “nerves” or punctuating the word “death,” are clearly meant to magnify the text.

**EXAMPLE 251** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St., pg. 9)

(low conga)  
congas  
claves  
(anycrown)  
suspended cymbal  
(low bongo)  
bongos  
(low timbal)  
timbales

And once again his empty pockets were empty and once again his arms were aching,  
(“y de nuevo sus bolsillos vacíos estaban vacíos y de nuevo le picaban los brazos”)

his nerves were doing weird things.  
los nervios le hacían cosas raras

**EXAMPLE 252** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St., pg. 10)

1" 3" 5" 7"

(J=60)

Congas  
claves  
cenc.  
bongos  
s. cym.  
timb.

tape

and once again he falls in love  
y de nuevo se enamora

with death  
de la muerte

the sight of his saliva makes everybody  
el espectáculo de su saliva desmaja a

The writing can also be pointillistic and sometimes very sparse.

**EXAMPLE 253** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St., pg. 15)

(narrator) and he has nothing to do but hang out and watch the blood fall from the snow inside his funeral stained thoughts  
 y no tiene nada que hacer sino aguantarse y velar la sangre caer desde la nieve interna de sus pensamientos teñidos de enterrados

The type of improvisation can also be varied like in this section where the lack of precise rhythmic durations creates an improvisation that is more experimental.

**EXAMPLE 254** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St., pg. 21)

(narrator) "for the next 13 minutes he throws up everything"  
 ("durante los 13 minutos siguientes lo vomita todo")

In this earlier passage, however, the syncopated and triplet rhythms generate a sound that is leaning more towards traditional improvisation, even though the very thick texture obscures that.

**EXAMPLE 255** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St., pg. 11)

(narrator) "his NIGHTMARE"  
 ("BESADILLA")

After much negative imagery, it is quite remarkable that the second movement ends on a positive note, even if only illusory. Percussion and dance serve as catalysts in a brief moment of joy.

...and for a few seconds all the buildings from the hudson river to the east river become palm trees, there was grass for everyone to walk on, drums were heard throughout the vicinity, everybody was dancing, elephants participated, the wind was scented with coconut integrity, for the first time in a very long time it was sweet smelling, everywhere you looked a rainbow was present.

A lively salsa rhythm with bongo improvisation, marked *con mucho sabor*, serves as the sonic scenario of the drums “heard throughout the vicinity.”

**EXAMPLE 256** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St., pg. 11)

The score for Example 256 consists of six staves for percussion: congas, claves, cent., bongos, timb., and tape. The congas, claves, and cent. parts feature a rhythmic melody with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bongos part includes a section labeled 'bongos improvise ("con mucho sabor")'. The timbale part has a steady eighth-note pattern. The tape part shows a series of 'x' marks indicating strikes. Below the percussion staves is a narrator line with the text: (narrator) a rainbow was present. / había un arcoiris.

The third movement is also contrastingly different from the first. Three percussionists engage in doo-wop singing and the ensemble only plays on bottles of wine filled with water to different pitches. Ortiz tries with this limited ensemble to create a colorful texture by asking the percussionists to strike the cans with light wooden sticks in three different places: on top (T), on the side (S), and on the rim (R).

**EXAMPLE 257** (124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St., pg. 26)

The score for Example 257 consists of three staves for percussion: bottles, cans, and tape. The bottles part shows a series of wavy lines representing different pitches. The cans part features a rhythmic pattern with dynamic markings like mf and f. The tape part shows a series of 'x' marks. Below the percussion staves is a narrator line with the text: (narrator) your shirt to keep your body warm your eyes were too weak to read the help wanted ads you was desperate / la camisa para mantener el cuerpo caliente tus ojos estaban muy debiles para leer los anuncios clasificados tu estabas desesperado

Although the timbre is extremely different, some textures recall the pointillistic and the unison textures in the second movement.

**EXAMPLE 258** (*124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, pg. 28)

and gallo port chilled  
y opato gallo frito

you try over and over again to impress the BASTARD  
sigues insistiendo una y otra vez en impresionar a los CABE

The fourth movement is rather short and unique for being by a different author, Sandra Esteves, and finishing with a poetic celebration of Afro-Caribbean resilience and culture.

Weaver weave us a song of many threads weave us a red of passion that beats wings against a smoky cloud and forces motion into our lungs weave us a song of red and yellow and brown that holds the sea and the sky in its skin that holds the bird and mountain in its voice that builds upon our graves a home for injustice fear oppression abuse and disgrace and upon these fortifications of strength unity and direction weave us a rich round black that lives in the eyes of our warrior child and feeds our mouths with moon breezes with rhythms interflowing through all spaces of existence a black that holds the movement of eternity.

Many Caribbean rhythms (*plena, clave, Afro-Caribbean, cascara, and bomba*) are again superimposed and heard both independently, because of the different tempos, but also as a complex unity fading out while the narrator walks off stage and the lights are dimmed gradually.

## CONCLUSION

Ortiz' percussion output is significant and encompasses major areas of contemporary percussion music. His compositions, like that of many Caribbean and Latin American composers, have incorporated elements of traditional cultures of the New World, especially the Caribbean, and have made the barriers between classical and non-classical harder to define. The use of the rich rhythmic language of traditional forms, along with Latin American percussion instruments and the performance practice associated with them, are prominent Latin American features in Ortiz' percussion music. Percussionists are required to sing and recite in several compositions and other instrumentalists are also called to participate as percussionists, much like they are in traditional Caribbean and Latin American ensembles. Ortiz' sensitivity to the beauty and value of popular culture is partly a reflection of his active involvement in doo-wop, rock, and salsa ensembles during his youth.

The influence of salsa with its array of styles is particularly important because it synthesizes Ortiz' own attempt to "unify our fragile and fragmented musical culture"<sup>124</sup> in a concrete way. Additionally, the aesthetics of salsa music, as outlined by Berríos-Miranda, seem to relate closely to important stylistic traits in Ortiz' compositions for percussion and thus point out what is of significance in Ortiz' style: rhythmic variety, complexity, and precision; economy of means, timbral diversity, improvisatory narrative, equality of participation, informality, passionate but detached performance, and communication. Particularly the rhythmic richness, which reflects both the unity and diversity of Latin American traditional musics, seems to be the best indicator of a

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<sup>124</sup> Ortiz, "Musical Snobism."

different aesthetic in the music of Latin American composers. Therefore, it seems that in order to appreciate Ortiz' Latin American sensibility, on a deeper level, one must become familiar with the musics and socio-cultural issues surrounding Puerto Rican and Nuyorican artists. Ortiz, however, does not think it is necessary for the performer and listener to become familiar with the sounds and language of Latin American popular music in order to appreciate his music better. He says, "In this global information age, I hope to deliver my music in the universal language of feeling and human spirituality, which is the heartbeat common to us all."<sup>125</sup> This remark is especially important as it proves that Ortiz believes his music is authentically Latin American regardless of its resemblance to traditional musics. In fact, he states: "Just living and working in Latin America the music is Latin American, no matter what technique is used. Villa Lobos once stated: 'I am folklore'."<sup>126</sup>

Ortiz is aware of the inevitable continuation of Western European traditions in the art music of the Americas, and his use of common compositional procedures such as augmentation, diminution, transposition, polyphony, canon, and a varied non-tonal harmonic language are the inheritances of Western music. There are also elements of North American experimental music in his compositions, especially in relation to the exploration of new formal designs. Ortiz accomplishes this by relying not on harmonic progressions or motivic development but on a complex interplay between gestures, timbres, and time changes. His use of timbre as a formal device is particularly unique. For example, both the vocalized graffiti at the beginning of *Tamboleo*, and the very different use of wooden mallets at the beginning of *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines*,

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<sup>125</sup> Ortiz, interview, 13 March 2005.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

serve the same function in the development of an asymmetrical form: to catch the listener's attention at the beginning of a piece with a strong color, never again recalled in the composition; or as Ortiz suggests: to create the mood necessary for the rest of the composition. Rhythm too is not simply a Latin American trait in Ortiz' percussion music. In fact, both North American and Latin American rhythmic motives are featured in *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines* and *Rapeo*, although the North American rhythms are harder to define.

Ortiz' percussion compositions are a significant contribution to the percussion repertoire as a whole. Of his solo percussion compositions, special attention should be given to *Palm Tree in Spanglish Figurines* for its depth of expression and large scope, which are unique in the context of solo timpani repertoire, and to *Tamboleo* for its ingenious polyrhythmic construction and economy of means, which reflect Ortiz' creativity and knowledge of Afro-Latin American rhythmic concepts. In his chamber music, percussionists are equal partners of other instrumentalists and often have a prominent role in the narrative of those compositions. In some instances, as in the clarinet part of *Loisai* or the flute and trombone parts of *Street Music*, other instruments are approached as percussion instruments, with the instrumentalists bringing out the rhythmic and coloristic qualities of those instruments. In fact, the use of single repeating notes, octave transpositions, and pitch economy could be classified as timbral techniques used by Ortiz. *Street Music*, along with *Graffiti Nuyorican* and *124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St.*, are perhaps Ortiz' most important compositions for percussion because they integrate avant-garde and traditional music elements in a very individual and successful manner, in

addition to the many compelling socio-cultural issues raised by the lyrics, and the vocalized and sonoral graffiti.

Ortiz' style could be broadly summarized as being polyphonic in nature with an ambiguous sense of time, economy of material, and textural diversity. It is in the rhythmic realm, however, where Ortiz's stylistic essence is found. The use of syncopated patterns, polyrhythms, and cross rhythms, often inspired by Afro-Caribbean traditional music and its offspring in the United States: salsa, and motives such as the *clave* and *cáscara*, give iconicity to his identity as a Latin American composer. While much of Ortiz' rhythmic vocabulary is clearly Latin American, there are also other musical elements that sound Latin American. The vocalized graffiti Ortiz recalls in his music as well as melodic patterns such as the guitar *guajeo*, the piano *montuno*, and the bass *tumbao*, have their own Latin American history despite the fact that they are played on European instruments. Author Berríos-Miranda also points out that the concept of intonation in salsa, for example, is different from the mainstream Western well-tempered ideal. She summarizes her research:

Intonation was one of the most fascinating aspects of salsa aesthetics that I encountered. I was surprised to learn how commonly salsa musicians associated "out-of-tuneness" with salsa authenticity, and how important a point of debate and disagreement this was...older salsa musicians tend to prefer the older *desafinado* (out-of-tune) sound while the younger ones are more accepting of the more polished conservatory sound...<sup>127</sup>

This is an area of research that would certainly better clarify the unique aspects of pitch that are relevant to the aesthetic appreciation of Latin American music.

William Ortiz is without a doubt a Latin American composer and his percussion music clearly reflects that. The Latin American elements in his music are not simply

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<sup>127</sup> Berríos-Miranda, 41-43.

reduced to a few rhythmic patterns such as the *clave* and *cáscara*. They encompass an entire cultural web that inspires the composer in different ways. In fact, four of those eight elements Sara E. Johnson relates as points of unity in the music of the Caribbean are discussed in this document: instruments, rhythms, performance techniques, and lyrics. Professor Gil summarizes the role of music, composition, and culture in the formation of Ortiz' Latin American identity well. He says:

The music of William Ortiz could be called necessary, or, if you will, of urgency. This, I believe, is due to various reasons, of which I will only point out two: the need to find his roots (we must remember Ortiz' New York background), and the need to create his own personal and particular form of artistic manifestation...If it is true that we inherit a nation, we also create it. In other words we are doubly tied to our nation: by birth right and by that which we voluntarily and freely choose. In Ortiz' work, that unavoidable inheritance is present ...William Ortiz is creating nationality even from the moment in which his art is no longer national (after all emotion and beauty have no nationality).<sup>128</sup>

In other words, Nuyorican themes and Caribbean and Latin American sounds are not measured and calculated to fit perfectly with those more established Western musical elements used by classical composers. They manifest themselves naturally in his compositions because they are not simplistic imitations of traditional patterns. In fact, with the exception of the *clave* and the *bomba*, none of the other devices mentioned in this document are exactly the same as those described by the scholars of each subject. They are Ortiz' own ideas inspired by traditional sounds. Of additional interest in regard to the above quotation is the fact that Manuel Casanova points out that Nuyorican popular musicians established their identities through salsa music. He writes: "Also noted in the music of these groups—especially that of salsa bands based in New York—is a certain

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<sup>128</sup> Gil, liner notes.

nostalgia, a yearning to ‘return,’ or to reaffirm Puerto Rican origin.”<sup>129</sup> That again reinforces the importance of salsa in Ortiz’ percussion music and shows its similar purpose to popular musicians.

But Ortiz is also more than just a Latin American composer. In fact, he says: “my percussion music represents a crystallization of some facet of my ‘latino’ identity.”<sup>130</sup> And it must be emphasized that this facet is crucial in his music for percussion. In the 1970s Salas wrote that some more cosmopolitan Latin American composers seemed by the 1960s to have caught up with the musical developments and aesthetic challenges faced by all twentieth-century composers. He wrote:

El concepto que el compositor hoy tiene de América Latina, o de cualquiera de sus países en particular, no está limitado a la sola consideración de las culturas vernáculas, ni a las europeas exclusivamente entroncadas a España y Portugal, como tampoco a las supervivencias precolombinas o de la música africana. Abraza todo esto, junto con otras influencias subsidiarias, y no por ello menos válidas e importantes, procedentes de Francia, Italia, Alemania, Asia, o de la misma América, producto de procesos de desarrollos internos, de tradiciones que son partes de otras mayores, pero que también pueden contribuir con expresiones propias. De modo que la necesidad de batir emblemas nacionales para proclamar sus identidades les parece totalmente superada.

[The concept the composer has of Latin America today, or of their own particular countries, is not limited to consider only the vernacular traditions, or those exclusively found in Spain and Portugal, neither those that survived from pre-Colombian times nor those of African music. It encompasses them all, along with other subsidiary influences, equally valid and important, those proceeded from France, Italy, Germany, Asia, or even from the United States, as a result of internal developments, of traditions that are a part of bigger ones, but that can also contribute with unique expressions. Thus, the necessity to devise national symbols in order to proclaim their identities seems to be completely surpassed].<sup>131</sup>

However, that accelerated process, he argues, was not a natural process of its own environment and, equally important, did not allow the Latin American audiences a

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<sup>129</sup> Casanova, *Salsa no es nada nuevo*, 120.

<sup>130</sup> Ortiz, correspondence, 25 July 2004.

<sup>131</sup> Juan Orrego-Salas, “Técnica y estética,” in *América Latina en su Música*, ed. Isabel Aretz (Mexico, D.F.: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, S.A. and Unesco, 1977), 185.

continuous process of listening experiences that prepared them gradually to face the new aesthetics and techniques of contemporary music.<sup>132</sup> As a result, he argues that the problems of identity persist in Latin America and that perhaps one day a Latin American aesthetic will develop, finally making it possible for the Latin American composer to feel he belongs as a legitimate member of world culture.<sup>133</sup> Eduardo Cáceres, on the other hand, proposes that the identity of the Latin American composer of the twenty-first century has been established and he argues in a positive fashion that:

Nuestra situación de país *latinoamericano, colonizado y tercermundista* nos da culturamente *más ventajas que desventajas*... Si tenemos que justificar el *folclore*, por ejemplo, en la actual globalización, es porque naturalmente todo tiene un lugar en donde nació. Lo que provoca la crisis es aquello que viene a asumir la careta de lo auténtico en otro lugar... Nuestra educación hacia el músico—y consecuente con esta postura—nos pondrá en la situación de asumir de una vez por todas nuestra *hibridez cultural*, nuestro todo, de lo que llega y se queda y asienta como si fuera propio; mas nada ha tenido la fuerza suficiente para constituirse como totalidad, porque nuestra totalidad necesaria e históricamente está en todo lo ecléctico que pueda ser nuestra música, así como lo ecléctico que nosotros somos.

[Our situation as Latin American countries, colonized and of the Third World gives us more advantages than disadvantages... If we have to justify the folklore, for example, in today's age of globalization, is because naturally everything has a place where it was born. What generates a crisis is that which pretends to be authentic in another place... Our education towards the musician—and consequently with this attitude—will lead us to accept once and for all our cultural hybridity, our development as something that is unified and ours does not exist, nothing has generated sufficient force to constitute a totality, because our totality logically and historically is everything eclectic that our music can be, just as we are eclectic ourselves].<sup>134</sup>

Ortiz' percussion music is exactly that, eclectic and open to any influences that serve for the creation of beauty. And above all, it is authentic, for it reflects Ortiz' cultural reality.

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>134</sup> Cáceres, 85-86.

Ortiz' music, then, contributes significantly not only to the percussion field but to a more precise definition of a Latin American aesthetic.

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## APPENDIX 1

### LIST OF LATIN AMERICAN COMPOSERS THAT HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE *FESTIVAL LATINOAMERICANO DE MÚSICA*

Jorge Luis Acevedo (Costa Rica)  
Coriún Aharonián (Uruguay)  
Javier Alvarez (Mexico)  
León Biriotti (Uruguay)  
Juan Blanco (Cuba)  
Carlos Cabrer (Puerto Rico)  
Germán Cáceres (El Salvador)  
Alejandro Cardona (Costa Rica)  
Walter Casas Napán (Peru)  
Gerardo Cavanna (Argentina)  
Roque Cordero (Panama)  
Manuel de Elías (Mexico)  
Aurelio de la Vega (Cuba-USA)  
Manuel Enríquez (Mexico)  
Aylton Escobar (Brazil)  
Milton Estévez (Ecuador)  
Mariano Etkin (Argentina)  
Carlos Fariñas (Cuba)  
Luis Fernando Franco (Colombia)  
Gerardo Gandini (Argentina)  
Orlando Jacinto García (Cuba-USA)  
Celso Garrido Lecca (Peru)  
Guillermo Gaviria (Colombia)  
Hilario González (Cuba)  
Guillermo Graetzer (Argentina)  
Federico Ibarra (Mexico)  
Enrique Iturriaga (Peru)  
Alejandro José Moya (Dominican Republic)  
Manuel Juárez (Argentina)  
Edino Krieger (Brazil)  
Francisco Kröpfl (Argentina)  
Ana Lara (Mexico)  
Mario Lavista (Mexico)  
Dieter Lehnhoff (Guatemala)  
Max Lifchitz (Mexico-USA)  
Beatriz Lockhart (Uruguay)  
Margarita Luna (Dominican Republic)  
Diego Luzuriaga (Ecuador)  
Antonio Mastrogiovanni (Uruguay)  
Gilberto Mendes (Brazil)  
Alfonso Montecino (Chile)

Marlos Nobre (Brazil)  
Juan Orrego Salas (Chile)  
William Ortiz (Puerto Rico)  
Andrés Posada (Colombia)  
Cergio Prudencio (Bolivia)  
Vicente Rojo (Mexico)  
Julio Roloff (Cuba)  
Arturo Salinas (Mexico)  
Jorge Sarmientos (Guatemala)  
Roberto Sierra (Puerto Rico)  
Ana Silfa (Dominican Republic)  
Francis Schwartz (Puerto Rico)  
Aurelio Tello (Peru)  
Alicia Terzián (Argentina)  
Héctor Tosar (Uruguay)  
Claudio Triputti (Argentina)  
Edgar Valcárcel (Peru)  
Roberto Valera (Cuba)  
Carlos Vázquez (Puerto Rico)  
Cecilia Villanueva (Argentina)

## APPENDIX 2

### INTERVIEW WITH COMPOSER WILLIAM ORTIZ

Q: You have lived both in the United States and in Puerto Rico. As a composer, are you equally North American and Latin American or is one side of your personality stronger than the other?

WO: At this point in time, since I've been living in Puerto Rico for at least 17 years straight, not counting my student years at the Conservatory, the scale is tipping towards the Latin American side. Although born in PR and raised in NYC – a time span of approximately 20 years, not counting my grad studies in the states, I feel that through this unique living experience it has enriched me musically and culturally through the interaction of both worlds.

Q: Are the aesthetics of Latin American music different from those of European and North American music?

WO: In general no. Latin American concert music usually follows in the footsteps of European or North American concert music. They are more or less the same. But it is important to point out, according to my perception, that where Latin American music is different aesthetically is in the rhythmic characteristics. I believe Latin American music has or should have a much richer rhythmic palette. I feel that percussion music is the very true soul of Latin American music in all its manifestations, especially in the Caribbean and in Brazil. That is why I have so often turned to percussion.

Q: In your view, are the Latin American composers of today treated on equal footing with European and North American composers?

WO: No, of course not. We are looked upon as something exotic, or some kind of novelty. But then again, that could also be an attraction. In general, we are mostly underestimated because of our powerlessness.

Q: How do you see your music fitting in the context of Latin American music and in the context of North American music?

WO: I write from the heart, from my personal experience and world. Hopefully my music will connect, communicate and fit into any context. Yes, there could be a piece that may not fit in politically in any context. For example a defying piece like "124 E. 107<sup>th</sup> St." for 6 percussionists, electronic tape and narrator, because of its crude and irreverent texts, may not fit in with any conservative audience. But that's exactly the purpose of the piece, to stir up thoughts.

Q: You are a guitarist. Do you play or have you played popular music?

WO: Yes. One of my early musical experiences was singing “Du-Wop” harmony on city street corners. Later on I organized, played guitar and sang in a Rock band. In Puerto Rico, I played piano in Salsa groups and bands.

Q: Some authors have stated that the barriers between art music and popular music have been broken in the Americas. Yet, it seems that the majority of musical institutions can hardly accommodate the study of popular music. In your opinion, should popular music have a place in those institutions? If so, how can the study of popular music be incorporated into the curriculum of art music institutions in a meaningful way?

WO: It seems to me that the segregation of music, as many musical institutions practice it reveals one of the prejudices hidden in our society. Such divisions as “Classical” and “Popular”, “Serious” and “Light”, “High Brow” and “Low Brow” are meaningless labels. Quality and talent can manifest themselves in all areas. So yes, popular music does have a place in academia, as long as it is studied and taught in an integrated manner, not separate from the classical tradition but ancillary to it, enriching it and thus making the “classical” relevant to our present day multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-national global melting pot.

Q: Can you recall any specific Latin American (Caribbean?) music or readings that were influential in the development of your musical language?

WO: Consciously (and unconsciously) probably the Puerto Rican “Bomba” has had some influence. It is an African derived chant and dance, highly polyrhythmic. The juxtaposition of 3 against 2 rhythmic cells is characteristics of this genre. This has been absorbed somewhat into my music.

Q: Is it possible that a listener might better appreciate your music by being familiar with the sounds and language of Latin American popular music?

WO: It may be recommended in some cases, just for better insight, but I don’t think it’s necessary at all. In this global information age, I hope to deliver my music in the universal language of feeling and human spirituality, which is the heart beat common to us all.

Q: Are perhaps the Pan-American genres of music (salsa, merengue, cumbia, reggae, jazz, and bossa-nova) the common denominators in the pursuit of common features in the music of many self-proclaimed Latin American composers?

WO: If the music caters to nationalistic trends, probably. But avant-garde composers have rejected any conscious use of dance or folk genres. Just living and working in Latin America the music is Latin American, no matter what technique is used. Villa Lobos once stated: “I am folklore”. As I have mentioned above, for me it is the rhythmic soul behind the music, quite different from the worn out euro centric tradition, that best defines a common denominator in Latin American concert music.

Q: What is your process of composing? Does it differ between pitched and "non-pitched" instruments?

WO: My compositional process is intuitive. I have dabbled with various compositional techniques as a student, but I have arrived at a non-dogmatic approach to musical structure. For me, it is a way of creatively experiencing the multiplicity of human experience. Consciously I have been inspired by the thoughts, sounds and pacing of urban life. This may convert into some musical ideas, which I may process and develop through fragmentation, variation, hoquet and transposition. Each composition is a personal journey with its very own narrative, be it for pitched or non-pitched instruments.

Q: Compositionally speaking, what are your views on the potential and weaknesses of percussion instruments?

WO: Percussion instruments offer a wider sound palette in which to work. As a composer I am interested in the infinite array of timbres and sound possibilities in percussion. Its appeal to me is both at a visceral and at a metaphorical level. The potential of percussion is huge. Percussion music still has not been given its due. There are so many avenues to explore. For instance, the use of kinetics as a parameter in a percussion piece would be interesting to explore. The weaknesses of percussion instruments would depend on what particular instrument we're talking about. Obviously, non-pitched percussion is at a disadvantage melodically. But like African talking drums, melodic patterns can be derived and/or be camouflaged.

Q: How did you decide on the instrumentation for *Graffiti Nuyorican*?

WO: In "*Graffiti Nuyorican*" I was looking for basic sound sources that provided long and short attacks, sustain and decay and rich harmonic overtone structures. Metallic percussion instruments and the piano have these qualities. My desire was to create new sounds as organic, beautiful and complex as those of the real world, in a music that reflects the aesthetics and attitudes of an urban society.

Q: What is the role of the human voice in your instrumental pieces?

WO: The human voice I use more as a sound (timbre) than a language. It's what I call *vocalized graffiti*. There may be certain inflections, rhythms, attitudes and cadences that may communicate the emotion, atmosphere or soulfulness that I am after in a piece. A scream, a hum, speech, etc. can be enlisted in the contrapuntal presentation of the sonic material as part of the overall texture. Always making sure that the flow of materials of diverse sonic qualities are presented as something integral.

Q: Could you explain and expand on the meaning of the text you use in *Graffiti Nuyorican*?

WO: These texts come from various sources: street calls, written graffiti on walls, excerpts from the writings of Nuyorican poets and salsa recordings.

- *“It’s on the roof 100 proof”* – refers to the practice of alcohol consumption on the roof of tenement buildings in the city. A line taken from a recording by the Joe Cuba Sextet dating from the 1960’s.
- *“It’s in my sneaker a bag of reefer”* – “reefer” was another name for marihuana in the 50’s and 60’s, especially among jazz musicians. Also taken from the Joe Cuba Sextet.
- *“el aguacero”* – literally “a heavy tropical rain fall”.
- *“The day the Lords and the Jesters jitterbugged down”* – The title of a Miguel Piñero poem. The Lords and Jesters were rival street gangs in New York City.
- *“Even Beethoven can’t keep up to my Latino reality”* - An exclamation of Latin pride.
- *“La Bodega sold Dreams”* – Also by Miguel Piñero. Bodega refers to a grocery store. It is used here as a metaphor relating to the economically deprived.
- *“Ain’t no snitch la coca is a bitch”* – Another excerpt from Miguel Piñero. “Coca” is cocaine. This exposes the drug subculture of the “barrio”.

### APPENDIX 3

#### WILLIAM ORTIZ' COMPLETE LIST OF WORKS

<b>Rapsodia</b>	
For guitar	(1970)-(79) 6'
<b>Sonatina</b>	
For piano	(1971) 12'
<b>Tamboleo</b>	
For percussion	(1972) 8'
<b>Un Jardín Chino de Serenidad</b>	
For fl; harp; vl; vla; vc; perc.	(1973) 10'
<b>3 Fragmentos para Guitarra</b>	
For guitar	(1973) 3'
<b>4 Piezas para Piano</b>	
For piano	(1974) 6'
<b>9 Poemas Zen</b>	
For soprano, tenor, fl., guitar	(1975) 15'
<b>Transformaciones</b>	
For piano	(1975) 25'
<b>Canto: 28 de Septiembre</b>	
For soprano, piano	(1975) 7'
<b>Pero Aún Más Te Quiero</b>	
For tenor or soprano, piano	(1975) 6'
<b>Marcos</b>	
For cassette tape	(1975) 2'
<b>Del Caserío</b>	
For sax; trpt; elec; gui; cb; perc.	(1976-85) 15'
<b>Kantuta (Ritual para Orquesta)</b>	
For Symphonic Orchestra	(1976) 15'
<b>Ciclo de Canciones Llorens Torres</b>	
For tenor, piano	(1976) 7'
<b>Cuarteto de Arcos #1</b>	
For string Quartet	(1976) 18'
<b>3 Songs from el Barrio</b>	
For baritone, piano	(1977) 5'
<b>Pavana</b>	
For guitar or piano	(1977) 2'
<b>Iluminación</b>	
For any solo instrument	(1977) 2'
<b>Suite: Tercer Mundo</b>	
For fl., recorder, 2 guitars, and perc.	(1977) 15'
<b>Música Para 2 Violonchelos, Flauta y Clarinete</b>	
	(1978) 10'
<b>La Mano de Hielo</b>	
For contralto, guitar	(1978) 3'

<b>Composición Electrónica</b>		
	For tape	(1978) 5'
<b>Diferencias</b>		
	For bassoon, harpsichord	(1978-9) 10'
<b>Elegía a Los Inocentes Caídos</b>		
	For Orchestra & Chorus	(1978) 11'
<b>Síntesis</b>		
	For guitar & tape	(1979) 5'46"
<b>3 estudios para Computadora</b>		
	For tape	(1979) 9'14"
<b>Dualidad</b>		
	For 2 guitars	(1979) 8'14"
<b>124 E.107th St.</b>		
	For Percussion, tape & narrator	(1979) 30'
<b>Amor, Cristal y Piedra</b>		
	For guitar, harp, hapsichord	(1980) 8' 30'
<b>Rumbo</b>		
	For violoncello, piano	(1980) 10'
<b>Street Music</b>		
	For flute, trombone, percussion	(1980) 9'15"
<b>Quinteto Para Metales</b>		
	For Brass Quintet	(1981) 10'
<b>Bembé</b>		
	For 4 percussionists	(1981) 15'
<b>Antillas</b>		
	For Chamber Orchestra	(1981) 15'
<b>Piezas Típicas Puertorriqueñas</b>		
	For 2 guitars	(1981) 11'
<b>Toque</b>		
	For 4 guitars	(1981) 10'
<b>Montuno</b>		
	For piano	(1981) 4'
<b>Composición para Violín, Violonchelo y Piano</b>		
		(1982) 10'
<b>Cool Breeze</b>		
	For flute, clarinet, bassoon.	(1982) 9'
<b>Resonancia Esférica</b>		
	For Symphony Orchestra	(1982) 18'
<b>A Cappella</b>		
	For 4 voices	(1983) 5'
<b>Graffiti Nuyorican</b>		
	For piano, percussion	(1983) 11'
<b>Cantares: La Tierra Prometida</b>		
	For sopr; bari; ob; horn; vla; cuatro or guitar, piano, perc.	(1983) 2'
<b>Music for University of Buffalo Promotional Film</b>		
	For clarinet; piano; bass, drums	(1983) 3'

<b>Del Tingo al Tango</b>	
For piano	(1984) 15'
<b>Soneo de la 22</b>	
For violoncello	(1984) 10'
<b>Abrazo</b>	
For 4 guitars	(1984) 11'
<b>Árboles</b>	
For 4 sopranos, piano, & Bar; fl; ob; hn; vl; vc; perc; pn.	(1984) 10'
<b>Nocturno en Una Noche Perdida</b>	
For clarinet	(1984) 7'
<b>Llegó la Banda</b>	
For Concert Band	(1984) 12'
<b>Madrigal</b>	
For contratenor, tenor, bass	(1984) 8'
<b>Una Visión Humilde</b>	
For organ	(1985) 6'
<b>Housing Project</b>	
For Saxophone Quartet	(1985) 15'
<b>Canción Nacida de Lucha</b>	
folk song	(1985) 3'
<b>Subway</b>	
For trombone	(1985) 7'
<b>Plena-Merengue</b>	
For sax, elec. guitar, percussion	(1985) 6'
<b>Urbanización</b>	
For 1 percussionist	(1985) 10'
<b>A Delicate Fire</b>	
For contralto, guitar	(1986) 18'
<b>Danza para Rhonda</b>	
For piano	(1986) 4'
<b>Rican</b>	
Opera	(1986) 60'
<b>Dos Gritos y Una Canción</b>	
For tenor & piano	(1986) 8'
<b>De Barrio Obrero a la Quince</b>	
For piano 4 hands	(1986) 10'
<b>Bolero and Hip-Hop en Myrtle Avenue</b>	
For oboe, piano	(1986) 10'
<b>Mulata Fantasía</b>	
For piano	(1987) 10'
<b>Ghetto</b>	
For singer/narrator, fl. amp. gui, perc.	(1987) 22'
<b>Cuarteto de Arcos, No. 2</b>	
For String Quartet	(1987) 26'
<b>HY-1-4175</b>	
For guitar & piano	(1987) 9'

<b>Palm Tree in Spanish Figurines</b>	
For 4 Timpani	(1987) 11'
<b>Joceo</b>	
For string orchestra	(1987) 10'
<b>Latino</b>	
For flute, clarinet, bassoon, piano	(1988) 9'
<b>Romance</b>	
For boy soprano or soprano & guitar	(1988) 6'
<b>Violation</b>	
For viola & piano	(1988) 8'
<b>Rapeo</b>	
For snare drum solo	(1988) 3'
<b>Pasacalle</b>	
For band	(1988) 5'
<b>Concierto de Metal para un Recuerdo</b>	
For Orchestra	(1989) 15'
<b>Bella Aleyda</b>	
For piano	(1989) 3'
<b>Página en Blanco y Staccato</b>	
For piano	(1989) 8'
<b>Quodlibet</b>	
For harpsichord	(1989) 6'
<b>Caribe Urbano</b>	
For flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, piano	(1990) 10'
<b>Suspensión de Soledad en 3 Tiempos</b>	
For Orchestra	(1990) 20'
<b>Nueva York Tropical</b>	
For fl; ob; cl; perc; vl; vc; pn	(1990) 10'
<b>Tríptico</b>	
For Mezzo Sopr, fl, ob, cl, hrn, bsn	(1990) 8'
<b>A Sensitive Mambo in Transformation</b>	
For elec. guitar, synthesizer, percussion, elec. bass	(1991) 6'
<b>Canción de Cuna</b>	
For piano	(1991) 1'
<b>Obra Pública</b>	
For flute, oboe, cl; hrn, bsn	(1992) 8'
<b>Garabato</b>	
For electric guitar	(1992) 5'
<b>Unknown Poets from the Full-Time Jungle</b>	
For Soprano & piano	(1992) 20'
<b>Música de Fiesta</b>	
For cuatro & guitar	(1992) 5'
<b>4000 Violines</b>	
For violins	(1993) 12'
<b>Loisai</b>	
For bass clarinet; marimba with perc.	(1993) 5'

<b>Opiyelgoabiran</b>	For contrabass & piano	(1993) 7'
<b>Guakia Baba</b>	For Mezzo & flute	(1993) 8'
<b>Tema para Amaya</b>	For piano	(1994) 3'
<b>Eco para un grito gris</b>	For marimba	(1994) 6'
<b>Trío Concertante en Tres Realidades</b>	For violin, viola; violoncello	(1995) 20'
<b>Polifonía Salvaje</b>	For alto sax & percussion	(1995) 5'
<b>Sal Soul 96.2 FM</b>	For 4 guitars	(1996) 7'
<b>Cantilena</b>	For guitar	(1996) 4'
<b>Dios se mudó de North Philadelphia</b>	For cl; ob; alto sax; vla; bsn; perc; pno; bass	(1996) 10'
<b>Música de Ciudad</b>	For Symphony Orchestra & Chorus	(1996) 25'
<b>Fotografía de Héctor</b>	For guitar	(1997) 3'
<b>Variaciones Mapeyé</b>	For doublebass & String Orchestra	(1998) 10'
<b>Ricanstructions</b>	For Flute & Guitar	(1999) 8'
<b>Piano al Tiempo de 3 Voces</b>	For Piano Concerto	(1999) 10'
<b>Tropicalización</b>	Guitar Concerto	(1999) 10'
<b>Tropical Love Song</b>	For violin & piano	(2000) 5'
<b>Songs from the Bilingual</b>	For Baritone & guitar	(2000) 10'
<b>Cantos Juveniles</b>	For Childrens Choir	(2000) 6'
<b>Esta es la tierra de los que aguantan callados y pacientes por un nuevo despertar</b>	Guitar Concerto	(2001) 20'
<b>Montage para un Sueño en Mi</b>	For Symphony Orchestra	(2001) 15'
<b>Elogio a la Plena</b>	For Concert Band or Orchestra	(2002) 10'
<b>121st Street Rap</b>	For Guitar	(2002) 7'
<b>Canción del hijo no nacido</b>	For 3 Child Sopranos, Flute & Piano	(2003) 10'

<b>Baby we're dancing some serious mambo</b>	
For Concert Band	(2003) 6'
<b>Solamente en silencio puedes escuchar a Dios cantar</b>	
For Handbell Choir	(2003) 7'
<b>Acordes Cotidianos</b>	
For 4 Clarinets	(2003) 4'
<b>The Well-Tempered Clave</b>	
For 4 Claves	(2003) 3'
<b>Bambulaé aya e</b>	
For Concert Band or Wind Ensemble	(2003) 6'
<b>Cantos de la Calle</b>	
For Mezzo-Soprano & Piano	(2003) 15'
<b>Rito Ceremonial of the Church of the Spanglish Nación</b>	
For 3 Sopranos, Flauta, Oboe, Piano & Cello	(2004) 10'
<b>3 Canciones para Soprano y Piano</b>	
For Soprano & Piano	(2004) 6'
<b>Ciudad en tropical jubilation</b>	
For Piano & Band or Orchestra	(2004) 20'38"
<b>Esencia de la Danza</b>	
For Band or Piano	(2004) 4'
<b>Cántico</b>	
For Chorus & Band or Piano	(2004) 6'
<b>Trova</b>	
For Band	(2005) 5'
<b>Soirée at La Playa Hotel</b>	
For Double Bass & Piano	(2005) 7'