

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

TO CUBA AND BACK:

THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF THE POLYPHONIC CHORAL HABANERA

A DOCUMENT

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

By

DAVID GÓMEZ
Norman, Oklahoma
2020

TO CUBA AND BACK:
THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF THE POLYPHONIC CHORAL HABANERA

A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Richard Zielinski, Chair

Dr. David Howard

Dr. Eugene Enrico

Dr. Bruce Boggs

© Copyright by DAVID GÓMEZ 2020
All Rights Reserved.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my doctoral committee members for investing their time and effort in my musical growth. I hope to carry their legacy proudly in my future endeavors. I would also like to thank my family. The research in this document will honor our Spanish heritage. Finally, I would like to thank all those who supported my opportunity to study at the University of Oklahoma. Your fortitude and patience allowed me to pursue my passion. I am confident this commitment will result in a future filled with wonderful music opportunities. I am honored, blessed, and forever grateful for all of you.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	iv
Abstract	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Statement of Purpose and Need for the Study.....	1
Scope and Limitations	3
Procedures and Methodology	5
Chapter 2: Survey of Related Literature.....	6
Chapter 3: History	13
Colonial Period.....	13
Conquest and Revolution	14
Chapter 4: Dance	18
Early History	18
Contradanza.....	20
Habanera.....	22
Influence.....	23
Chapter 5: Music	27
Early History	27
Contradanza.....	29
Habanera.....	33
Chapter 6: Polyphonic Choral Habanera.....	45
History	45
Analysis	48

Chapter 7: Conclusions	53
Bibliography	55
Appendix A: Polyphonic Choral Habanera Repertoire	57
Appendix B: San Pascual Bailón.....	60
Appendix C: El Amor en el Baile	62
Appendix D: La Paloma by Sebastián Iradier	63
Appendix E: Original Title Page of Tú	64
Appendix F: Tú by Eduardo Sánchez Fuentes	65
Appendix G: Overview of Tú.....	71

Abstract

The habanera is a music and dance form originating in Havana, Cuba, during the eighteenth-century Spanish colonial period. The Spanish travelers returned to the Iberian Peninsula with the sensual habanera rhythm and fascinating experiences on the island. Cuban composers had initially fused these elements with Spanish romanticism. The habanera caused an immediate impact when it arrived in Europe. Many prominent late romantic composers featured the exotic style in their works. Habaneras were composed in choral arrangements for over a century after their continental arrival. These arrangements gradually produced a twentieth-century Spanish choral art form known as the polyphonic choral habanera. The repertoire has remained unfamiliar to non-Iberian choral communities. This document aims to familiarize ensembles and audiences with this valuable exotic choral repertoire, which captivantly documents the history of Spanish travel to Cuba.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of Purpose and Need for the Study

I am a first-generation American conductor with heritage from Spain. My primary research focus is on Iberian choral genres formed due to Spaniards venturing to the New World. During the Spanish colonial period, the travels of my migrant ancestors were often forced by a need to find sustenance for their families. For centuries, many Spaniards had been living in rural areas under meager conditions. Other times, they traveled willingly to seek adventure in the newly discovered exotic lands. Nevertheless, they did not see the impact their back-and-forth journeys would have in forming new music, which held:

a nostalgia for the times of the long-gone travel to Cuba. Songs that invoked the years of military service or travel in search of prosperity became a window to the exotic world full of palm trees, sensual mulatto women and brave sailors. The exotic imagery of the songs gave a chance to the listeners and the singers to forget, at least for a moment, the limitations and scarce reality of the post-war Spain and allowed them to liberate their imagination.¹

The habanera is a music and dance form originating in Havana, Cuba, during the eighteenth-century Spanish colonial period. The Spanish travelers returned to the Iberian Peninsula with the sensual habanera rhythm and fascinating experiences on the island. Cuban composers had initially fused these elements with Spanish romanticism. The habanera caused an immediate impact when it arrived in Europe. Bakhtiarova explains:

Habaneras, whose very name points to their connection with the Cuban capital city, Havana, once called Spain's "beloved" colony, are sung all over Spain. These seductive and nostalgic songs in a languid two by four time tend to speak

¹ Galina Bakhtiarova, "The Iconography of the Catalan Habanera: Indianos, Mulatas and Postmodern Emblems of Cultural Identity," *Music in Art* 35, no. 1/2 (2010): 237.

of outlandish women left behind in the distant tropical paradise of the Caribbean, and of the brave and powerful men. Born as a product of the transculturation that underlies the formation of Cuban culture and nation, habaneras continue their almost two-hundred-year history into the twenty-first century.²

The Spanish migrants used the habanera to recount tales of their time in Cuba. In these songs, they “invoked nostalgia for the lost tropical paradise of the Caribbean, its sensual women and lost opportunities for fortunes and enrichment.”³ Prominent late romantic composers featured the exotic habanera style in their works. The French particularly enjoyed its musical exploration. It rapidly became a tool for composers who were seeking to introduce elements of exoticism in their music. The use of the habanera style became a way to simulate Spanish flair.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the habanera was perceived by many as a trademark of “Spanishness,” and European composers such as Georges Bizet, Camille Saint-Saëns, Emanuel Chabrier, Eduard Lalo, Raúl Laparra, and Maurice Ravel, among others, exploited it in musical pieces with a “Spanish” theme.⁴

Habaneras were composed in choral arrangements for over a century after their continental arrival. These arrangements gradually produced a twentieth-century Spanish choral art form known as the polyphonic choral habanera. Manuel explains:

Most such habaneras were written by amateur or semiprofessional tunesmiths and were sung by amateurs at family gatherings, as sidewalk serenades, or as formal or informal musical soirées. Despite the decline of some of these contexts under the impact of modernization, habaneras continue to be actively performed, especially by amateur groups at formal concerts, most typically by two, three, or four vocalists, accompanied variously by accordion and/or stringed instruments. The tradition remains particularly strong in Torrevieja. The

² Bakhtiarova, 233.

³ Bakhtiarova, 233.

⁴ Bakhtiarova, 233.

songs are rendered in languid tempo, with the softly swaying habanera rhythm pervading melody and voice.⁵

The polyphonic choral habanera encompasses a substantial body of repertoire. Unfortunately, the form is relatively unknown outside of the Iberian Peninsula. This realization creates a warranted need for study to familiarize ensembles and audiences with this exotic choral literature. The purpose of this document will be to discover the elements which contributed to the origin and evolution of the polyphonic choral habanera. The effort will provide a new choral repertoire option, which captivately documents Spanish travel history to Cuba. The research will culminate in a compositional overview of a celebrated work of the choral form. The endeavor will highlight this valuable and exotic repertoire.

Scope and Limitations

The research scope will span from early Cuban colonial history to the arrival and development of the polyphonic choral habanera in southern Spain. Fairley explains that “The music has absorbed influences from migration to Cuba of Andalusians and people from the Canary Islands, as well as Italian bel canto vocal style and other Mediterranean elements, and Afro-Cuban syncopations. Habanera is also sung in villages in Spanish Castile, brought there by returning sailors.”⁶ The habanera is part of the rich Spanish culture of *ida y vuelta* (there and back) driven through sea trade and

⁵ Peter Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, Studies in Latin American and Caribbean Music (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 98.

⁶ Jan Fairley, “Habanera,” Grove Music Online, n.d., <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000012116>.

naval conquests between Spain and Cuba. This document will elaborate on the specific elements which formed and developed the polyphonic choral habanera.

The primary research limitations lie in the scarcity of topic sources. Most of the remaining sources are out of print and required a thorough search to locate. The shortage creates uncertainty dating back to even recognizing the origin of the *contradanza*, which is the forefather of the habanera. Manuel explains:

Despite its centrality to Cuban cultural history, many aspects of the *contradanza*'s career remain obscure and contentious. Just as some European scholars disagree as to whether the *contradanza* originated in England, France, or elsewhere, so do some Cuban musicologists differ as to whether the *contradanza* in Cuba should be traced primarily to input from Spain, Saint-Domingue (Haiti), France, the English West Indies, or elsewhere.⁷

Documentation concerning the polyphonic choral habanera is scant due to the form emerging from Spanish folk music communities during the twentieth century. For decades, fishermen on the Spanish Mediterranean coast developed and maintained the choral form. They used habaneras to recount stories of their ancestors' visits to Cuba. Bakhtiarova explains that "During the first half of the twentieth century, they were perhaps the only means of self-expression for the fishermen in remote Costa Brava villages during the long winter nights, and an entertainment for the well to do summer dwellers that arrived to spend their vacation time in these villages."⁸ Unfortunately, stigmatism shrouded the polyphonic choral habanera due to the colloquial origin of the form. Spanish concert audiences and universities are now recognizing the quality of this exotic choral literature and slowly considering it part of Spanish *art music*.

⁷ Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 51.

⁸ Bakhtiarova, "The Iconography of the Catalan Habanera," 233.

Procedures and Methodology

The document procedures will entail examining early Cuban colonial history, which will reveal the elements that formed and developed the polyphonic choral habanera. An exploration of habanera dance, music, and text will detail their foundations. Connections between Spain and Cuba will trace how the form arrived in Europe. The prominent composers and works contributing to the development of the style will be outlined. The influences of the habanera on broader musical styles will be principally detailed in the habanera's impact on the formation of the Argentinian tango. Ultimately, the scope of research will highlight the habanera's manifestation in the polyphonic choral habanera.

A deeper understanding of the polyphonic choral habanera was gathered with attendance at an annual summer habanera choral contest. Every July, the Certamen Internacional de Habaneras y Polifonía (International Choral Contest of Habaneras and Polyphony) in Torre Vieja, Spain, hosts a weeklong choral festival. Music aficionados and highly prepared choirs have been coming to this Spanish coastal city since 1955 to compete in showcasing the polyphonic choral habanera. This document will culminate in a compositional overview of Manuel Massotti Littel's 1954 arrangement of the SATB polyphonic choral habanera *Tú* by Eduardo Sánchez Fuentes. This work was featured at the inaugural Certamen Internacional de Habaneras y Polifonía in 1955. *Tú* is one of the most celebrated works of the polyphonic choral habanera repertoire.

Chapter 2: Survey of Related Literature

Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980) was a Swiss-born Cuban novelist and music historian instrumental in documenting the habanera's importance. Carpentier was raised in Havana and strongly identified with Castro's revolutionary movement. In 1941, he published *La Música en Cuba* in Spanish, which was translated by Timothy Brennan in 2001. Carpentier produced the most extensive study of Cuban music history to date. He drew on primary sources and musical scores. Carpentier explained:

This work has been written almost entirely with primary documents. Given the shallowness or lack of seriousness in the few books on Cuba's musical history, I felt obligated to return to primary sources of information. There were early warning signs that a number of generally accepted claims made in the work of even solid foreign scholars, misled by their credulity, had been the result of the most ingenuous fantasy.⁹

Carpentier's study included European-style Cuban music, as well as the popular Spanish folk and Afro-Cuban styles. Manuel summarizes that *La Música en Cuba* is:

a straightforward history and overview of Cuban music, with relatively little interpretive or conceptual framework. As it remains the finest work of its kind on Cuban music, an English translation has been overdue, and the present edition--with a lengthy introduction by Timothy Brennan--is a welcome contribution to studies not only of Cuban music, but also Caribbean and Latin American culture in general. Moreover, as Brennan argues, Carpentier's study was in its own way a landmark in the growing legitimization of New World and especially Afro-Latin vernacular culture.¹⁰

Elena Pérez Sanjurjo published *Historia de la Música Cubana* in 1986. The Spanish source provides another complete overview of Cuban music. Sanjurjo was born in Cuba and held several prominent cultural posts on the island. *Historia de la Música*

⁹ Alejo Carpentier, *Music in Cuba* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 61.

¹⁰ Peter Manuel, "Music in Cuba (Review)," *Cultural Critique* 49, no. 1 (January 1, 2001): 1.

Cubana features an examination of critical Cuban composers and their works. The source contains information on Cuba's initial inhabitants' music, Cuba's discovery, Spanish influence on Cuban music, church music in Cuba, Cuban opera, and other popular Cuban genres.

Zoila Lapique Becali (b. 1930) published *Música Colonial Cubana* in 1972. The Spanish source examines reviews of Cuban musical works featured in Cuban periodicals from 1812 to 1902. The source traces the origin of several important works, composers, and concerts in Cuba during the end of the Spanish colonial period. A portion of the book presents a chronological overview of critical Cuban composers of the period. In the preface, Lapique Becali states that *Música Colonial Cubana* intends to fill gaps within Cuba's musical history. The work contains a vital entry from a Cuban newspaper recording the commencement of the habanera style.

"The Iconography of the Catalan Habanera" by Galina Bakhtiarova discusses iconography depicting the habanera. Bakhtiarova explains that "In addition to illustrations in books, habaneras generated a variety of images, such as contemporary commercial publicity materials, posters, postcards, and brochures that played an exceptional part in the transformation of these songs into a nation-wide phenomenon and an intrinsic part of the Catalan cultural identity."¹¹ The article also contains valuable but brief information concerning the history of the polyphonic choral habanera.

Cuba: A Short History by Leslie Bethell (b. 1937) is a vital source used in collecting important content on Cuba's early history. The book imports four chapters

¹¹ Bakhtiarova, "The Iconography of the Catalan Habanera," 1.

from *The Cambridge History of Latin America*. The contributors are leading scholars, which trace Cuba's political, economic, and social development from the mid-eighteenth century to the twentieth century. Zoumaras explains that "Four leading scholars of Cuba do a commendable job in just 172 pages, including excellent separate bibliographies and a generally useful index."¹² Zoumaras indicates that "Compilations frequently lack thematic threads. This is not so with *Cuba: A Short History*. For example, each author examines Cuba's position in the international economy; they also address the vagaries of internal politics."¹³

The Early History of Cuba 1492-1586 provides additional historical documentation. The source was published in 1916 by Irene A. Wright (1879-1972). Wright was an American journalist and historian who wrote extensively on the colonial history of the Caribbean. In 1932, Wright moved to Seville and served as a representative of the Spanish Library of Congress until the Spanish Civil War forced her exit. Wright returned to the United States to work as an associate archivist for the United States National Archives. An examination of *The Early History of Cuba 1492-1586* by *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* states:

This book, as the preface states, is the first history of Cuba written from the original sources. It is divided into four sections corresponding with the same number of periods. . . . Four chapters are devoted to the relation of events in Cuba, one treats of the early Florida expeditions from the viewpoint of Cuba and another (with XVI the most enlightening in the book) deals with the social, municipal, agricultural and commercial development of the island during this period.¹⁴

¹² Thomas Zoumaras, "Cuba: A Short History: Bethell, Leslie, Ed.: New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 172 Pp., Publication Date: June 1993," *History: Reviews of New Books* 22, no. 3 (1994): 117.

¹³ Zoumaras, 117.

¹⁴ Wright Irene A., "Review of The Early History of Cuba, 1492-1586," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (1918): 327.

Manuel Cañizares Llanes completed “La Habanera en Torre vieja: Patrimonio Cultural Imaginado”¹⁵ in 2013. The dissertation details how the habanera shaped the city of Torre vieja, Spain. The work assumes a strictly anthropological and sociological approach since Cañizares Llanes was not a musician. Unfortunately, research was unsuccessful in finding a completed dissertation on the polyphonic choral habanera. The deficiency further justifies the need for study.

In 2010, Francisco Sánchez attempted a dissertation on the polyphonic choral habanera. “La Habanera: Evolución Social, Musical y Pedagógica en Torre vieja” was inexplicably discovered on the active archive records of the University of Murcia (Spain). *Objetivo Torre vieja* provided information concerning the possible existence of the work. The cultural journal held a conference in Torre vieja, Spain, on December 10, 2010, announcing the start of work on the Sánchez dissertation. The audience was grateful for the presentation of a pending dissertation showcasing the polyphonic choral habanera. The work would be a vast undertaking in two volumes, totaling almost 800 pages. It was explained that the document would position “their habanera for consideration in being introduced to music conservatories and universities.”¹⁶ The city of Torre vieja considers the polyphonic choral habanera a proprietary cultural jewel.

The University of Murcia Library was contacted to obtain a copy of Sánchez’s dissertation. The library apologetically explained that the work was not completed. As a result, the dissertation catalog number was immediately removed from their records.

¹⁵ Manuel Cañizares Llanes, “La Habanera en Torre vieja: Patrimonio Cultural Imaginado” (2013), <http://dspace.umh.es/handle/11000/1476>.

¹⁶ Francisco Sánchez, “La Habanera: Evolución Social, Musical y Pedagógica en Torre vieja,” *Objetivo Torre vieja* (blog), 2010, <https://objetivotorrevieja.wordpress.com/2010/12/10/presentada-la-tesis-doctoral-%e2%80%9cla-habanera-evolucion-social-musical-y-pedagogica-en-torrevieja%e2%80%9d/>.

Sánchez was contacted regarding the uncertainty. He abruptly confirmed that the dissertation was never finalized.

The habanera is classified as an exotic form of music due to its tropical origin and evocative texts. To properly examine the form, it is essential to include a discussion on exoticism in music. Ralph P. Locke is regarded as the foremost expert in this field. In 2009, he published *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections*. Locke states, “The present book explores one repertoire (some of it much-loved) that has needed more systematic attention: musical works from Europe and America that were/are patently inspired by and evocative of exotic places.”¹⁷ Locke further explains that his book “sketches some ways in which Western art music may be approached through criticism that is open to divergent points of view and sensitive to the interactions and cross-currents between different layers of social and cultural analysis.”¹⁸

Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections is divided into two parts. The first portion focuses on theoretical concepts outlined in the realm of musical exoticism. The second portion analyzes instrumental, dramatic, and theatrical genres involved in exoticism’s different styles and worlds. Betzwieser explains:

Locke’s book deals with a wide range of topics related to exoticism in Western music, spanning the period from the beginnings of musical orientalism in the late seventeenth century to today’s phenomena of exoticism in a global age. We can hardly imagine any scholar better suited to deal with such a wide scope. The author has worked extensively on nineteenth-century exoticism as well as on earlier aspects of this particular phenomenon, and he is the author of the entries ‘Exoticism’ and ‘Orientalism’ in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001).¹⁹

¹⁷ Locke, Ralph P., *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 17.

¹⁸ Locke, Ralph P., 17.

¹⁹ Thomas Betzwieser, “Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections - By Ralph P. Locke: Book Reviews,” *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, no. 2 (2012): 274.

The influence of the habanera on the formation of the Argentinian tango is revealed through two essential sources. *The Meaning of Tango: The Story of the Argentinian Dance*, published in 2008 by Christine Denniston, traces the roots of the Argentinian art form. Grunklee explains that “Denniston is well-versed in this lively genre. Beginning with the meaning and purpose behind the dance, she describes its history, focusing on the immigration, romance, politics and passion that were imperative to its inception and how it has evolved over time.”²⁰ *Tango: The Art History of Love*, published by Yale art historian Robert Farris Thompson in 2006, provides a different look at the impact of the habanera on the Argentinian tango. The author explains that tango is not merely about flashy choreography but also an essential source of valuable text, music, and art. On the source, *Publishers Weekly* states that “He then explores the tango’s relationship to cakewalk, ragtime, and Cuba’s habanera.”²¹

Since their inception, polyphonic choral habaneras have not seen substantial music score publication. This deficiency was remedied by the organizers of the Certamen Internacional de Habaneras y Polifonía (International Choral Contest of Habaneras and Polyphony). Since 1955, the organization valuably commissioned a yearly polyphonic choral habanera work. These selections were featured as required repertoire for choirs competing in their annual choral contest. The effort has added to the continual growth of published polyphonic choral habanera repertoire. The Certamen Internacional de Habaneras y Polifonía organization now preserves all known polyphonic choral habanera scores (see appendix A) in an open-source website geared

²⁰ Grunklee, Dana, “The Meaning of Tango: The Story of the Argentinian Dance” 30, no. 8 (2008): 86.

²¹ Publishers Weekly, “Tango: The Art History of Love” 252, no. 27 (2005): 72.

at promoting the music.²² It is a valuable resource for choirs interested in featuring this exotic repertoire.

²² Patronato municipal de Habaneras y Polifonía de Torre Vieja, “Partituras de Habaneras,” Partituras de Habaneras, n.d., <https://habaneras.org/partituras.htm>.

Chapter 3: History

Colonial Period

Several paramount events impacted the formation of the habanera during the early history of Cuba. During the mid-eighteenth century, the Spanish colony was still a forested and uncharted island. Most of the population resided in Havana. Bethell explains that “The port city had been built in the 1560s utilizing a natural harbor on the north of the island to act as a depository from where the Spanish treasure fleet could pick up a large naval escort in protection.”²³ Following the establishment of Havana, the population in the city grew to around 150,000. One could see castles and churches surrounding the outskirts of the city. Three fortresses protected Havana. Wright explains, “All of these fortifications were indicative, not of any appreciation of Cuba for herself, but of the strategic importance of Havana as a wayport between the mainland of America and the Peninsula of Spain.”²⁴

Until the mid-eighteenth century, political control of Cuba lay with the captain-general. He was supervised by the viceroy in Mexico, which was part of the larger viceroyalty of Nueva España (New Spain). Cuba was several weeks away from Mexico, and Spain was over a six-week voyage. Cuba was internally governed by a small bureaucracy of officials appointed to their posts by administrators in Seville. Most of the officials were poorly paid. Politically corrupt activities made up for their financial shortcomings. Bethell explains:

Treasurers, accountants, judges, naval commissars and port officials of every kind came as poor *peninsulares* to the Spanish empire, as did bishops and priests, and expected one day to return which to Andalusia or to Castile. But

²³ Leslie Bethell, *Cuba: A Short History* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1.

²⁴ Irene A. Wright, *The Early History of Cuba, 1492-1586* (Macmillan, 1916), 224.

many such persons never in fact returned home and left the families to swell the class of *criollos* who managed the town councils, establish prices for most basic commodities, farmed and often eventually became merchants or landowners.²⁵

A handful of Spanish *criollo* families formed an aristocracy, which enabled them to own most of Cuba's land. They lived in Havana and visited their sugar and tobacco plantations during harvest time. Their slaves undertook work on the plantations. Regarding Cuban slave labor, "three things distinguished Cuba from many non-Spanish colonies in the Caribbean: the relatively small number of slaves; the relatively large number of free blacks and mulattos; the importance of urban life."²⁶ The small number of slaves was due to the prevalence of smaller sized Cuban plantations. Bethel adds that "Freed negroes constituted almost a third of the black and mulatto population of the city of Havana. This high proportion was partly the consequence of explicit laws making the purchase of liberty by slaves easier than in, say, British colonies."²⁷ The formation of additional cities continued as the social and political structure of the island evolved. Freed slaves formed a large part of these newer flourishing Cuban cities.

Conquest and Revolution

In 1762, Cuba was marked by a significant event. That year, the British temporarily occupied Havana with the victory by Lord Albemarle over the Spanish. Since 1492, Havana had never fallen to foreign invaders. The capturing of Havana created a mercantile and cultural boom on the island. The victory was an opportunity for British merchants to come and sell goods in Cuba. Numerous investors from outside the Spanish empire also arrived to exploit Cuba's natural resources. As a result, many

²⁵ Bethell, *Cuba*, 4.

²⁶ Bethell, 4.

²⁷ Bethell, 4.

new types of farming technologies were introduced to propel the sugar industry. This innovative period transformed Cuba into a prosperous sugar colony. Unfortunately, the British introduced 4,000 new slaves to bear the brunt of farm labor. This figure was equivalent to one-eighth the number of slaves already in Cuba.

The British removal of old Spanish taxes and restrictive regulations on incoming foreign trade provided additional prosperity. Despite the economic growth, British occupation was not welcomed. Carpentier documents that “Discontent was widespread. That is why when the occupation initiated by Great Britain began, long-standing resentments surfaced in the heat of the battle. For the common folk, this was, in the end, a conflict between the king of Spain and the king of England.”²⁸ Ultimately, British control of Cuba was short-lived due to the Paris Peace Accord of 1763. To the delight of many Cubans, the treaty forced the British exit. The Accord returned Cuban rule to the Spanish crown and *criollo* aristocracies.

Following the Paris Peace Accord, the Spanish re-introduced Cuban taxes at a fairer rate. Additionally, “Foreign merchants were not only permitted to enter and to settle in the island but were also allowed to buy property; so both British and United States merchants were soon to be found well-established there.”²⁹ These factors guaranteed Cuba’s prosperity well into the next century. Tobacco and sugar remained at the forefront of the Cuban economy. The prosperous Cuban staple crops were sought out by many of the world markets. Bethell indicates:

By the turn of the eighteen and nineteenth century, therefore, Cuba was plainly a very promising part of the Spanish empire, bidding fair, with its plantations

²⁸ Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, 121.

²⁹ Bethell, *Cuba*, 6.

spreading far away from Havana, to overtake Jamaica as the biggest producer of sugar in the Caribbean. Spain gave every physical encouragement both to those producing and exporting sugar and to those seeking an adequate slave labor force.³⁰

In the neighboring French colony of Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti), grave injustices in slave labor created rising tensions during the eighteenth century. Popkin explains:

Imports of slaves to the island averaged over 15,000 a year in the late 1760s; after an interruption caused by the American War of Independence, they soared to nearly 30,000 in the late 1780s. Nowhere else had slaveowners learned to exploit their workforce with such harsh efficiency: by 1789, there were nearly twelve black slaves for every white inhabitant, and the wealthiest Saint-Domingue plantation-owners were far richer than Virginians like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.³¹

The injustice led to the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), which was an anti-slavery and anti-colonial uprising. The insurrection was led by a former slave, Toussaint Louverture, along with liberated slaves from French colonial rule in Saint-Domingue. Carpentier explains that “After the first slaughters, many fled the disorder. Those settlers who could find a passing boat went to New Orleans. But, for those who only had a schooner at their disposal, the Cuban coast offered surer and closer refuge.”³² Additional waves of refugees flooded into Cuba as the Haitian revolution progressed. The influx unsettled Spanish control over the island. The refugees brought African cultures, traditions, and dances to Cuba, contributing to the habanera formation.

³⁰ Bethell, 7.

³¹ Jeremy D. Popkin, *A Concise History of the Haitian Revolution* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 10.

³² Bethell, *Cuba*, 146.

Spanish hold over Cuba was further weakened when Napoleon invaded Spain in 1808. The attack stressed Spanish military resources needed for maintaining power in the Americas. Bethell explains:

The Napoleonic wars were, of course, the midwife of Latin American Independence. Cut off from the *madre patria* by the destruction of the Spanish fleet at Trafalgar, enriched by the last thirty years of Bourbon economic reformation, and politically stimulated by the American, as well as French revolutions, *criollos* in South America everywhere began to contemplate political autonomy, even formal independence from Spain.³³

Spanish control over Cuba spanned roughly four centuries. The hold began with Cuba's discovery in 1492 and ended with the Cuban revolution of 1898. Travel ties to motherland Spain were impaired when Cuba gained independence. However, by then, the habanera's roots had already escaped to Spain through exploration and sea trade. The twentieth-century evolution of the polyphonic choral habanera was primed and ready to begin on Spain's southern coast.

³³ Bethell, 10.

Chapter 4: Dance

Early History

Dance formed a vital part of Spain's social structure during the Spanish colonial period. Social dances such as the *fandango*, *malagueña*, *granadina*, and *chacóna* were highly popular. These styles drew from the variety of regions and cultures within Spain. The dances were introduced to the Indians, blacks, and mestizos in the Americas as Spanish travel became more extensive. The native cultures added their imprint on these dances. Carpentier explains:

The primitive dances brought from the Iberian Peninsula acquired a new form in the Americas as they encountered blacks and mestizos. Their tempos and movements modified, enriched by gestures and figures of African origin, they tended to make the reverse journey, returning their [European] source, but with novel aspects added.³⁴

During the same period, the country dance began to influence courtly dance in England. The dance originated as an English folk dance during the late 1500s and became highly admired at Elizabeth I's court. The country dance gained peak popularity during the eighteenth century. Manuel summarizes:

The genre spread to France, the Netherlands, and elsewhere in continental Europe, replacing the formal and ceremonious minuet as the favored social dance of the upper and middle classes. In different forms it was cultivated both by nobility at courts and as a favorite diversion of the rising bourgeoisie.³⁵

The country dance was performed in two long parallel lines of dancers in which a predefined sequence of figures was repeated to fit a fixed length of music. The figures

³⁴ Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, 98.

³⁵ Peter Manuel, "From Contradanza to Son: New Perspectives on the Prehistory of Cuban Popular Music," *Latin American Music Review* 30, no. 2 (2009): 190.

involved interaction with other dancers in the line. The dancing proceeded so that one could dance with everyone in the group. Sharp explains that the dance was regarded as “a moderate and healthful exercise, a pleasant and innocent diversion, if modestly used and performed at convenient times, and by suitable company.”³⁶ The country dance entered France during the Regency (1715-23) of Philippe d’Orléans following the death of Louis XIV. The French took a deep interest in the English dance and renamed it with a 1710 dance book titled *Recueil de Contredanse*. The French altered the English dance. They had the dancers assume a compact cube formation, with the participants facing each other. Sharp explains that “The French who adopted one particular form of the English dance, known as a *square dance for eight*, developed it, and called it the *contredanse*.”³⁷

Throughout the eighteenth century, France faced economic and political challenges. Despite this, French elite culture thrived during the period. The minuet and contredanse were the favored social dances. These dances “came to be imitated throughout Western Europe, including Spain.”³⁸ Manuel summarizes:

By the time of the French Revolution of 1789, the contredanse had come to replace the minuet as the opening dance at formal balls held by the queen. In subsequent years, French aristocrats freely adapted new figures from staged versions of operatic contredanses. As it gained in popularity, the contradance, although of English origin, came to be thought of in many circles as an essentially French entity, especially as French elite culture became the model for much of Europe. From 1700 the rule of the Italo-French Bourbon family in Spain further promoted the spread of the French-style contradance to that country, as did Napoleon’s occupation of the peninsula in 1808.³⁹

³⁶ Cecil James Sharp, *The Country Dance Book* (London: Novello and Company, 1909), 13.

³⁷ Sharp, 13.

³⁸ Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 54.

³⁹ Manuel, 4.

Contradanza

The 1762 English conquest of Cuba introduced the country dance to the Caribbean island. The French contredanse entered Cuba four decades later. This version was brought by the waves of Haitian refugees who escaped to the island during the Saint-Domingue revolution. The refugees were well versed in the contredanse. The arrival of the two sister dances melded to form the Cuban contradanza. Manuel explains:

In the 18th century the contradance spread to Cuba, whether from Spain, France, England, or all three. It became particularly popular in Havana, a port city whose inhabitants and visiting sailors were celebrated (or denounced) for their love of dancing. In the years around 1800, the advent of tens of thousands of refugees from the Haitian Revolution further stimulated the contradanza in eastern Cuba, especially Santiago.⁴⁰

The fusion of the English and French dances took on distinct changes in the Cuban contradanza. It was now customary to form two long lines, which faced each other—one line consisting of all women, and the other of all men. As a result, dance couples of opposite sexes were formed. Pichardo describes:

All are obliged to imitate the figures successively. . . . Any variation introduced by another couple is considered disrespectful. Only he who has set the figure, after he goes down [the rows] and comes back—that is, after he has danced alternately with each couple—entitled to change the figure. Therefore, he should set easy figured so that others will not get mixed up, which would be called *perderse* [getting lost].⁴¹

Additionally, the Cuban contradanza did not rely on the *bastonero* (caller) to indicate figure changes. In the English and French versions, “The cane-wielding

⁴⁰ Manuel, “From Contradanza to Son,” 191.

⁴¹ Esteban Pichardo, *Diccionario Provincial de Voces Cubanas* (Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno, 1861).

bastonero, if not actually calling the figures would serve as a master of ceremonies, perhaps announcing the sequence of figures danced by all, controlling the duration of the piece, and arraying the dancers before the beginning, including selecting the couple skill and fortunate enough to romper la danza, or open the dance.”⁴² The omission of the *bastonero* permitted the contradanza rhythmic and interpretive freedom. Manuel confirms that “no bastonero would be present, such that the dancers would either repeat a standardized simple sequence (typically, *paseo*, *cadena*, and *cedazo*) or be obliged to remember a lengthy series of figures, typically as learned in the dance schools.”⁴³

The sugar boom in Cuba created vast amounts of wealth, which led to new social classes. Consequently, Havana’s cultural life expanded greatly during the period. “In the early 1800s the city’s cultural scene came to life dramatically. The main catalyst was the Haitian Revolution, which ended that colony’s only pre-eminence as a sugar exporter, opening the way for Cuba to step into that role and emerge as the economic powerhouse of the region and one of the richer countries in the world.”⁴⁴ Cubans of all social strata were interested in partaking in the new contradanza dance, including the higher strata Cuban *criollos*. The dance was equally attractive to the Cuban middle class and the lower class of blacks. Carpentier states, “the *contradanza* had acquired a French status through and through, spreading principally among the middle class. It was an honest figure dance, with certain good-natured gallantry, and did not require an

⁴² Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 64.

⁴³ Manuel, 64.

⁴⁴ Manuel, 57.

enormous choreographic ability from the dancers. But this dance did have an inherent element that was powerfully seductive to blacks.”⁴⁵

Distinct rhythmic additions inspired by African dances marked the contradanza’s evolution. Cuba’s black musicians transformed the early traditional rhythms of the contradanza into new dotted and syncopated rhythms. Manuel explains that “the rhythmic creolization process well underway, in Cuba in the mid-1700s, such that the Franco-Haitian input would merely have reinforced, rather than initiated, the flourishing of the Cuban contradanza.”⁴⁶ The newfound rhythmic freedom and creolized bass lines permitted the contradanza to occupy a principal role in Cuban culture, seeking its individualized identity.

Habanera

During the 1840s, Cubans began referring to the contradanza as the *habanera*, which means dance from Havana. On November 13, 1842, an instrumental contradanza titled *El Amor en el Baile* (Love in the Dance) was published in Havana’s *La Prensa* newspaper. The newspaper referred to it as the “new habanera song.”⁴⁷ *La Prensa* coined the term *habanera* with this reference, and it would become the standard term for the style. The habanera was inspired by growing Cuban nationalism. During this period, Cubans were searching for their own independent identity from Spain. The habanera fittingly provided individual expression of local and creole ideals, fused with

⁴⁵ Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, 145.

⁴⁶ Manuel, “From Contradanza to Son,” 55.

⁴⁷ Lapique Becali, Zoila, *Música colonial cubana en las publicaciones periódicas (1812-1902)* (Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1979), 120.

European melodies and the slave's African rhythms. On the new habanera dance,

Manuel summarizes:

Composed and performed by both whites and people of color, it was also danced by enthusiasts of all racial backgrounds, often in contexts designed for their intermingling. As such, contradanza culture constituted a fluid medium in which musicians, musical elements, and dancers of different social strata mingled and interacted. The contradanza was the most seminal of colonial-era Cuban musics, giving birth directly to the habanera.⁴⁸

The habanera was typically in a slow tempo and duple meter (2/4 or 6/8). It featured a sensual and lilting rhythmic ostinato in the bass, which became very popular in Cuban society. In its basic form, the habanera consisted of two sections of eight-bars each, repeated for a total of 32 bars. Different dance figures distinguished each of the eight-bar segments, with the second half livelier than the first. The habanera was performed by couples rather than in lines or cube formations used in the earlier English and French styles. It featured luxurious steps in which the feet were hardly lifted from the ground. Sensual movements of the arms, hips, head, and eyes were also incorporated.

Influence

Thompson recognizes the popularity and worldwide spread of habanera music and dance. He states, "habanera, armed with harmonies and words from Iberia and propelled by a bass that was black and spiritual, became the first world beat. Its wide diffusion, as we have seen, was facilitated by Cuba's sheet music publishing

⁴⁸ Manuel, "From Contradanza to Son," 190.

industry.”⁴⁹ Throughout its history, the habanera has inspired several other styles of music and dance. Manuel confirms:

The habanera rhythm, whether as a melodic figure or even as an accompanimental ostinato, can be found in such a wide variety of musics worldwide that it cannot be conclusively traced to any particular source. However, its prominence in the Antilles is probably best seen as a Congolese-derived Afro-Caribbean practice, virtually disseminating thence to the conga processional drumming of Santiago to Cuba, the Dominican *palo corrido*, the Spanish theatrical tango, the languid habanera vocal song, the early Argentine tango, and other genres.⁵⁰

Manuel concludes, “The habanera rhythm has long outlasted the contradanza itself, constituting a standard bass pattern in the bolero, the chachachá, and, in a modified form, the percussion ostinato in Trinidadian soca and Spanish Caribbean reggaetón.”⁵¹

The habanera’s most significant influence occurred during the mid-nineteenth century. During this period, the habanera was brought to Argentina by Spanish sailors in Cuba. These adventurous men continued to seek new fortune in far off lands. Gift explains that “During this period when the habanera, a half-Spanish, half-black music with roots in the Antilles, was brought to Argentina by sailors from the Caribbean islands, social dancing took on a new look.”⁵² The habanera’s captivating ostinato bass lines served as an inspiration to many Argentinian dances, most notably, the tango. Thompson confirms, “When the Afro-Cuban habanera, words and rhythm in enchanting combination, arrived in Buenos Aries after 1850, it triggered a sequence that led to three

⁴⁹ Robert Farris, Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 2005), 116.

⁵⁰ Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 69.

⁵¹ Manuel, 20.

⁵² Virginia Gift, *Tango: A History of an Obsession* (BookSurge, 2008), 168.

dances: milonga, canyengue, and tango.”⁵³ On the habanera’s influence on tango,

Thompson explains:

The formula [of tango] was simple: habanera beat + melody. . . . tango had absorbed habanera rhythmic structure. . . De Caro added slide effects on violin and bandoneon, placing them in the melody where you might least expect them; but these rich innovations should not conceal the fact that he had tangoized the habanera. . . . The secret of habanera’s longevity is its seductive bass pattern. The habanera bass, still audible in milonga, is outwardly simple: a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth and two eighth notes. Every other beat is strong. . . This invites off-beating.”⁵⁴

Thompson summarizes that the habanera bass “commands us to dance. In working-class Buenos Aires it conjured improvised dance moves among blacks and their friends. Early in the twentieth century a black guitarist names Luciano Ríos would carry it straight into tango.”⁵⁵ Following the habanera’s influence on tango, the new Argentinian dance migrated to France. In Paris, the tango went on to inspire several French composers. The French found interest and curiosity in this sibling rhythm of the habanera. Parisians were already familiar with the habanera from Saumell, Cervantes, Iradier, and Fuentes’s works. Burkholder confirms:

Another dance import was the Argentine tango, which was itself based on the habanera rhythm. It came over from Argentina to Paris around 1908, then hopped the English Channel to Britain in the early 1910s. Again, it was imitated by European composers, such as Satie in “Le Tango (perpétuel)” from *Sports et divertissements* (1914) and Stravinsky in *L’histoire du soldat* (1918).⁵⁶

The habanera went on to influence other worldwide forms well into the twentieth century. Most recently, it developed the polyphonic choral habanera in

⁵³ Robert Farris, Thompson, *Tango*, 111.

⁵⁴ Robert Farris, Thompson, 112.

⁵⁵ Robert Farris, Thompson, 111.

⁵⁶ J. Peter Burkholder, “Music of the Americas and Historical Narratives,” *American Music* 27, no. 4 (2009): 416.

southern Spain. Thompson concludes, “Meanwhile, in North America, habanera infiltrated jazz. It inspired classical composers in Europe: Gorge Bizet, Manuel de Falla, Claude Debussy, Maurice Joseph Ravel, and Erik Satie. Today habanera is the official tavern music of the Catalan coast of northeastern Spain. We are dealing with a music that rounded the world and goes on.”⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Robert Farris, Thompson, *Tango*, 112.

Chapter 5: Music

Early History

The English country dance arrived in France during the early eighteenth century. In France, it was known as the contredanse and quickly became the most popular dance of the century, eclipsing even the minuet. Byrd, Campra, Rameau, Mouret, Chedeville, Leclerc, Mozart, and even Beethoven composed music for the contredanse. The music typically had a 2-part melody that was divided into two sections and repeated. The structure yielded 8-bars in the first melody, then 8 (or more) in the second. The meter was always duple, in either 2/4 or 6/8. These selections were lively, especially in the second portion, with the tonality typically in major keys. The featured melodies would have been sung by a large part of society.

As discovered through the historical overview, the British country dance entered Cuba through British conquest in 1762. The French contredanse arrived in Cuba with the Haitian revolution of 1791. Both dances fused to form the Cuban contradanza. Contradanza music was primarily instrumental and used to accompany the popular dance. The use of duple meter continued to define these works. Manuel indicates that “many Cuban contradanzas were in 6/8 time (and could themselves be interspersed with waltzes, rigodóns, and other items in a soirée). As in Cuban contradanzas, the instrumentation can vary depending on the resources available, with a solo piano sufficing if need be.”⁵⁸ All levels of Cuban society were interested in the contradanza. They “were danced variously in elite ballrooms, at plebian fiestas for people of color, and at bailes de cuna, where slumming white playboys could fraternize with mulatta

⁵⁸ Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 91.

women.”⁵⁹ Contradanza composers borrowed well-liked Cuban melodies and even tunes from European operatic arias. Pichardo confirms:

Its music sometimes consists of pleasant fragments from operas, or from popular songs, with a distinctive bouncy bass all its own, especially in the second section, ever changing, ever sweet, merry, or sad, sentimental or romantic, whose measured tones mark the imperturbable dance-steps of the *sons* of this area.⁶⁰

Rhythmic facets of the contradanza began to evolve during the late eighteenth century. African dance influences from Cuban and Haitian slaves permeated the music. Carpentier states, “Thanks to blacks, there was a growing hint in the bass lines, principally in the accompaniment of the French *contradanza*, of a series of displaced accents, of ingenious and graceful intricacies, of “ways of doing” that created a habit, and originated a tradition.”⁶¹ The characteristic bass lines were infused with an animated creole character. They “used a dotted 8th–16th–8th–8th rhythm as a bass or left-hand ostinato, especially in the B section.”⁶² Manuel adds, “While white musicians tended to stick to the written score, black and mulatto ensembles—like their swing big band counterparts in the United States a century later—were celebrated for the inimitable interpretive and especially rhythmic flair which they enlivened contradanzas and other pieces.”⁶³ The new creole-inspired bass line rhythm became the fundamental element of the contradanza. The bass line would soon be shaped into an identifiable bass ostinato in the habanera. Manuel summarizes:

Nevertheless, the habanera rhythm, especially as an ostinato, became especially pronounced and stylistically significant in the Caribbean, where its prominence

⁵⁹ Manuel, “From Contradanza to Son,” 191.

⁶⁰ Pichardo, *Diccionario Provincial de Voces Cubanas*, 89.

⁶¹ Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, 158.

⁶² Manuel, “From Contradanza to Son,” 191.

⁶³ Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 61.

was clearly due to Afro-Caribbean input...and became a recurrent and characteristic ostinato in the Cuban contradanzas that flourished from then until the 1880s, when the *danzón* came into vogue.⁶⁴

Contradanza

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century in Cuba, “Contradanza scores were published regularly in newspapers, commercial editions, and ephemeral music journals.”⁶⁵ Contradanza piano arrangements were commonly published from the period of 1800 to 1830. Juan Federico Edelmann published most of these editions. Manuel adds that Edelmann’s “sons Carlos and Ernesto, also played a particularly important role in disseminating local compositions throughout most of the nineteenth century.”⁶⁶ Contradanza piano works became a staple of the amateur Cuban pianist. They were played during theatrical intermissions, in parks, and cafes.

Elite Cuban composers were also interested in the contradanza. The popular dance was transcribed into piano music by Manuel Saumell Robredo (1817-1870) and Ignacio Cervantes (1847-1905). These composers were responsible for taking “the first decisive steps toward musical nationalism in Cuba.”⁶⁷ The Cuban contradanza rhythm served to explore new Cuban nationalistic sentiments. Saumell’s romantic piano style also incorporated elements from Afro-Cuban genres and *guajira* traditions. The works of Saumell served to set the standard for nineteenth-century Cuban *art music*.

Carpentier details:

Born in 1817 into a destitute family, Saumell was destined to die relatively young, after leading a scattered life full of disappointments. An acceptable but

⁶⁴ Manuel, 20.

⁶⁵ Manuel, “From Contradanza to Son,” 191.

⁶⁶ Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 58.

⁶⁷ Gerard Béhague, *Music in Latin America* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1979), 102.

not brilliant pianist, he knew the kind of turmoil experienced by those who try to live by their art in a meager milieu, where ubiquity had to make up for slim earnings. . . . He was a truly hard worker, sensitive, generous with others, demanding of himself; he was eager to achieve great things, inspired to great projects, but he was the perennial victim of the lack of time to compose, affecting anyone who attempts to where dignity and decency with the dearth of lucrative work.⁶⁸

Saumell's piano work were highly creative and incorporated influences from the European romantic piano repertoire. Manuel confirms:

Saumell's contradanzas are regarded as masterpieces of invention and variety. Melodies and textures are diverse and effective, and the B sections embody a skillful balance of creole syncopations and light-classical poise. . . . Saumell is regarded as the first whose contradanza transcended mediocrity and the first to achieve an artful synthesis of European sophistication.⁶⁹

Ignacio Cervantes (1847-1905) was equally well known for his contradanza piano works. He wrote more than fifty examples, which capitalized on the characteristic lilting bass line. Cervantes had a successful career as a concert pianist in Cuba, Europe, and the United States. He was highly regarded for his *21 Danzas Cubanas* written for piano from 1875 to 1895. Béhague confirms their newfound nationalistic character and states, "These works reveal an extraordinary variety of rhythmic combinations. Their second sections generally present the most national character, by means of rhythmic figuration."⁷⁰ The works were set in a two-part form, with each of the sections in sixteen-bar length. These pieces were "restrained and lyrical rather than showy or bombastic."⁷¹ Manuel adds that Cervantes "follows the rhythmic patterns associated

⁶⁸ Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, 186.

⁶⁹ Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 80.

⁷⁰ Béhague, *Music in Latin America*, 103.

⁷¹ Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 85.

with the tango and the habanera.”⁷² His music was the immediate precursor to the new habanera style. Cervantes expertly fused the contradanza ostinato bass line, creole character, and European compositional elegance in his works. Carpentier summarizes:

Cervantes expressed himself with sobriety, without saturating the staves . . . His line is always precise, clear, bare, with great airy spaces between the notes. Without having to quote popular melodies, Cervantes managed to distill an artful, subtle Cuban creole character, in a way that could only constitute the combination, and the end, of an era and a genre. . . . In his time, the contradanza was at the end of its rhythmic and melodic evolution—black rhythm, European melody—which lasted more than eighty years. . . . When Cervantes appeared, this genre had reached the limit of its possibilities, having supported all of the rhythmic combinations that were admissible within a binary measure.⁷³

Cervantes and Saumell foreshadowed the Cuban folk and popular genres of the early twentieth century. These elements served to usher in the *Afro-Cubanismo* style.

On these two composers, Manuel concludes:

The contradanzas of all these composers tended to adhere to the conventions of the genre, with its regular eight-bar phrases, its concise bipartite form, and, as notated for piano, its general avoidance of virtuoso frippery, which would in any case have posed problems for ensemble and amateur renditions. Since the pieces were meant to be accessible to listeners and amateur performers, that also display none of the formal innovations in structure, texture, and harmony that characterized contemporary European pieces by Liszt, Chopin, or the late Beethoven; in spirit, they are closer to short, unpretentious works by Schubert or Mozart.⁷⁴

The golden age of the Cuban contradanza stretched from 1820 to 1880. As the nineteenth century progressed, contradanza ensembles were primarily made up of black and *mulatto* musicians. Music was not considered a respected career for white upper classes in Cuba, which consequently opened the door for lower classes to participate in

⁷² Béhague, *Music in Latin America*, 103.

⁷³ Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, 212.

⁷⁴ Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 73.

a music career. Manuel confirms, “Contemporary whites did not regard music as a prestigious occupation, while for free blacks, who were denied access to law, medicine, and administrative jobs, music could constitute a presentable avocation that even offered a certain sort of access to elite society, albeit through the servants’ entrance.”⁷⁵ Carpentier adds, “From 1800 to 1840, blacks were the clear majority of the professional musicians. . . . Almost all of the good black performers of the time wrote *contradanzas*. But above all, we see a yearning to keep up with and assimilate all the musical influences brought to the island.”⁷⁶

The contradanza was the first Cuban music to tether all characteristics which embodied Cuba. The style served to embrace Spanish traditions, European dance forms, Creole culture, and African rhythms. Manuel summarizes, “Given the popularity of the contradanza among diverse races and classes, and the concomitantly growing sense of pride in Cuban identity, it is not surprising that by the 1830s the genre was already being explicitly celebrated as an emblem of local creole culture, with its distinctive sensuousness and melancholy voluptuousness.”⁷⁷

The popularity of the Cuban contradanza was also widespread in neighboring lands. The exported dance was accompanied by concern, primarily due to dancing with the opposite sex and couples of mixed racial makeup. Manuel explains:

When in the 1840s the contemporary Cuban danza/contradanza was adopted in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and, subsequently, Santo Domingo, it was denounced and vehemently by moralists, presumably because of its intimate couple dancing. For the same reasons conservative elites of Santiago de Cuba in the 1850s were scandalized by the sensual dancing called “sopimpa,” named after a popular dance. In class terms, couple dancing came from both above and below,

⁷⁵ Manuel, 61.

⁷⁶ Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, 161.

⁷⁷ Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 62.

being associated at once with the cosmopolitan waltz and with the local clubs where young playboys could socialize with women of color.

The contradanza saw additional modifications when it was exported to neighboring countries. These changes were mainly noted in an expanded length, which provided a further exploration of the dance. Manuel explains:

The Puerto Rican danza, for its part, could be extended by two means. First, as indicated in scores, the composer could write additional sections, extending the piece to 130 bars or more. However, Cuban danza, from “San Pascual Bailón” to those written by Cervantes in the 1860s, adhered rigidly to the format of only sixteen bars of notated music (totaling thirty-two with repeats).

Habanera

The earliest surviving habanera composition was the anonymous *San Pascual Bailón*, written in 1803. It offered an energetic setting of the characteristically lilting dotted eighth note, followed by sixteenth note bass line figure (see appendix B). *San Pascual Bailón* was the first composition to use this pattern as a repeating and unifying rhythmic element in its B section. The rhythm became the principal feature of the habanera. Elements of it were initially found in the contradanza, but they saw a transformation in the habanera. Although *San Pascual Bailón* was referred to as a contradanza, the bass line syncopations in the B section took on the mid-nineteenth century habanera characteristics. Manuel summarizes, “By that period the contradanza had already assumed a creolized form, as evidenced by the earliest documented Cuban contradanza, “San Pascual Bailón” of 1803, with its prominent use of the syncopated

“habanera” (or “tango”) rhythm in its B section.”⁷⁸ On the new habanera bass line ostinato, Rey explains:

In both these “parent” rhythms, the strong portion of each beat is articulated. However, it is not uncommon in black rhythms to represent the strong portion of the beats with silences. Several variants are thus formed through this African tendency of emphasizing the weak portion of the beats, thereby generating syncopation by shifting the accents. Consequently, each of the parent rhythmic figures generates three related syncopes by silencing or eliding the notes coinciding with the strong portion of beats one or two or both one and two. The elisions reconfigure the sequence of articulations, thus creating derivative, but no less prominent, syncopes.⁷⁹

An overall examination of *San Pascual Bailón* reveals a binary form with relatively simple diatonic melodies. The purpose of the work was to provide music for the dance. Therefore, the work offers minimal harmonic complexity. Manuel explains that its original notation as a piano score “could often be regarded as a skeletal basis for performance by a chamber ensemble—typically, a string- or wind-dominated *orquesta típica*.”⁸⁰ The possibility for new elaborate orchestrations expanded the instrumentation which could participate in performances. The instrumental arrangements explored a variety of wind and string configurations. The ensembles (*orquesta típica*) were often led by a clarinet and horns, which consisted of six to twelve total members. Manuel explains:

These ensembles served as conduit between the realms of art music and popular dance music; the musically literate and formally trained wind and string players brought a classical polish to the assorted popular tunes they included in their repertoires while also introducing these songs to elite salon audiences.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Manuel, “From Contradanza to Son,” 191.

⁷⁹ Mario Rey, “The Rhythmic Component of ‘Afrocubanismo’ in the Art Music of Cuba,” *Black Music Research Journal* 26, no. 2 (2006): 193.

⁸⁰ Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 68.

⁸¹ Manuel, 60.

On November 13, 1842, an instrumental contradanza titled *El Amor en el Baile* (Love in the Dance) was published in Havana's *La Prensa* newspaper. The anonymous melody was set to piano accompaniment by Vuelta-Adentro (see appendix C). The newspaper referred to it as the "new habanera song."⁸² *La Prensa* coined the term *habanera* with this reference, and it would become the standard term for the style.

Lapique Becali explains:

El Amor en el Baile is a song completely in the habanera style that expresses all those tropical feelings which truthfully describe nature and the voluptuousness of Cuban dances. . . . This song means a lot to our musical history. It is the first piece for voice and piano, whose rhythmic accompaniment incorporates the schema earlier referred to as habanera. Until this moment, this was reserved for the majority of contradanzas of the country.⁸³

The practice of adding a vocal melody with lyrics to habanera piano arrangements became popular during the second half of the nineteenth century. "The new form of *canCIÓN* was intended for listening rather than for dance and went on to be cultivated, somewhat marginally, either as a sort of urban folksong for two singers and guitar or as a salon item for voice and piano."⁸⁴ The height of the new habanera song form was seen in the 1879 habanera titled *La Paloma* (The Dove) by Basque composer Sebastián Iradier (1809-1865). The habanera inspired Iradier in his 1850s visit to Cuba. The sensual song lyrics of *La Paloma* became an immediate success.

⁸² Lapique Becali, Zoila, *Música colonial cubana en las publicaciones periódicas (1812-1902)*, 120.

⁸³ Lapique Becali, Zoila, 120.

⁸⁴ Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 96.

La Paloma

Cuando salí de la Habana, válgame Dios
Nadie me ha visto salir, si no fui yo
Y una linda guachinanga como una flor
Se vino detrás de mí, que sí señor
Si a tu ventana llega una paloma
Trátala con cariño que es mi persona
Cuéntale tus amores, bien de mi vida
Corónala de flores que es cosa mía

Ay chinita que sí, ay que dame tu amor
Ay que vente conmigo chinita
A donde vivo yo

Ay chinita que si, ay que dame tu amor
Ay que vente conmigo chinita
A donde vivo yo

—

The Dove

When I left Havana, oh my God
No one has seen me leave, but I went
And a nice Mexican like a flower
Went after me, yes sir

If a dove comes to your window
Treat it with affection it's my person
Tell it about your loves, the good of my life
Crown it with flowers that is my thing

Oh, dark girl, yes, oh, give me your love
Oh come with me, dark girl
To where I live

Oh, dark girl, yes, oh, give me your love
Oh come with me, dark girl
To where I live

Emilio Grenet theorized, “We Cubans, do not know what nationality to assign to ‘La Paloma,’ and if we wish to consider it as Cuban, considering that Yradier resided in Cuba some time, we could only do so by virtue of naturalization.”⁸⁵ *La Paloma* was published worldwide in several languages (see appendix D). Many habanera song arrangements in a similar style soon followed. They featured a vocal line that was “more akin to the treatment of a romanza and opera arias, the melodic line gained presence at which it was more extensive and fluid due to the use of poetic texts, with long verses and literary images, which inspired the ample capabilities of the solo singer.”⁸⁶

The new habanera song arrangements featured texts inspired by the rich Spanish culture of *ida y vuelta* (there and back) that existed through sea trade and naval conquests between Spain and Cuba. The Spanish lyrics often reminisced of Spanish romantic relationships with the sensual *mulatta* (Cuban woman of mixed African and Spanish blood). Other themes were of sad farewells and loneliness at sea. Bakhtiarova explains, “The protagonist and narrator of these songs was oftentimes a brave soldier or a sailor whose life was associated with seafaring professions and travel. This is perhaps how the singers saw themselves in their fantasies. The antagonist, was the female, a mysterious and ever desired woman, frequently of another race, the *mulata*.”⁸⁷

In 1890 Eduardo Sánchez Fuentes (1874-1944) composed *Tú* (You) at the age of 16. The immensely popular work was published in 1894 (see appendix E). *Diccionario*

⁸⁵ Emilio Grenet, *Popular Cuban Music* (Revisionist Press, 1985), 23.

⁸⁶ Emilio Casares et al., “Diccionario de la Música Española e Hispanoamericana” (Madrid: Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 2000), 177.

⁸⁷ Bakhtiarova, “The Iconography of the Catalan Habanera,” 234.

de la Música Española e Hispanoamericana importantly states that *Tú* is “one of the most idealized representations of the new habanera song genre . . . the work is recognized as the start of a new era of habanera composition. From this moment, into the mid-twentieth century, the creation of habaneras travels through two lines, those for professional concert use or popular purposes.”⁸⁸ The *concert habanera* would inspire several European composers during the late nineteenth century. The French and Spanish were interested in incorporating this new exotic genre in their music. It quickly became a tool for composers seeking to introduce elements of exoticism in their music. The use of the habanera style became a way to simulate Spanish flair.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the habanera was perceived by many as a trademark of “Spanishness,” and European composers such as Georges Bizet, Camille Saint-Saëns, Emanuel Chabrier, Eduard Lalo, Raúl Laparra, and Maurice Ravel, among others, exploited it in musical pieces with a “Spanish” theme.⁸⁹

Most notably, Bizet borrowed, or some say stole, Iradier’s *El Arreglito* from the 1840s for his famous *concert habanera* aria *L’amour est un oiseau rebelle* in *Carmen*. Habanera rhythms also found their way into French instrumental pieces by Saint-Saëns, Chabrier, Debussy, Lecuona, and Maurice Ravel. The form equally inspired Spanish composers such as Isaac Albéniz and Manuel de Falla. On *concert habaneras*, Manuel indicates:

Habaneras also became popular in Cuban zarzuelas (light operas), as in their peninsular Spanish counterparts, which flourished in the decades around 1900. Salon habaneras also came to be cultivated in Venezuela, Mexico, Argentina, and elsewhere in Latin America. In Europe, the habanera went on to be cultivated as a lesser, slightly exotic concert piece, by Debussy (e.g., in *La puerta del vino*, 1913), Ravel in his *Rapsodia Española*, 1898), Chabrier

⁸⁸ Casares et al., “Diccionario de la Música Española e Hispanoamericana,” 177.

⁸⁹ Bakhtiarova, “The Iconography of the Catalan Habanera,” 233.

(*Habanera para piano*, 1895), Saint Saens (for solo violin, 1887) and other French late Romantics.

Incorporating the habanera style in these late romantic composers' works gave these pieces an impression of exotic travel to Cuba. However, it was not an authentic representation of the music once heard in Cuba. Locke refers to this perspective in *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* as an "Exotic Style Only" approach. He explains:

The "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm of musical exoticism is particularly well suited to dealing with exotically colored instrumental works, in which there are usually no clues to the work's intended ethnic reference other than the notes and other markings in the score and perhaps brief title. Mozart's keyboard "Rondo alla turca" again comes to mind, as do important works by several generations of French composers, including Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole* and Debussy's *Pagodes*.⁹⁰

Locke adds that these romantic European composers aimed at providing the impression of an "Elsewhere" in their music. He states that these composers "set out to reflect an identifiable—whether real or half-imaginary—place, people, or culture that the composer understands as being significantly different from home. These works construct an Elsewhere. Such portrayals or evocations of the distant and different are most often, by common consent, called *exotic*."⁹¹ Locke summarizes that some western composers of the period were experts at recalling "a distant landscape or culture that they once encountered, or that they may even know well. . . . Whatever the process, the

⁹⁰ Locke, Ralph P., *Musical Exoticism*, 22.

⁹¹ Ralph P. Locke, "On Exoticism, Western Art Music, and the Words We Use," *Archiv Für Musikwissenschaft* 69, no. 4 (2012): 323.

creator of an exotic musical work achieves a vision, or a reflection, of a distant and different realm.”⁹²

The *popular habanera* form was primarily propelled through works inspired by Sánchez Fuentes’s *Tú*. This document’s remainder will trace and discuss this leading work’s influence on the *popular habanera* style. Manuel begins:

Meanwhile, in the decades around 1900 quite distinct kind of habanera took root in Spanish port towns in Cataluña, Valencia, Murcia, Asturias, Galicia, and elsewhere. Like other lyric song forms associated with maritime cities, these habaneras sang of the longing and pangs of separation generated by sea travel. More specifically, they sang of Cuba, which so many thousands of Spaniards had visited in those decades, whether as soldiers, sailors, merchants, or migrant workers. For many thousands of Catalans, Galicians, and others, Havana was a more familiar and inviting city than Madrid. Hence despite the sufferings endured by so many soldiers in the War of Independence, the habaneras, like flamenco-style *guajiras* popular at that time, idealized Cuba as a land of palm trees, flowers, sea breezes, and lovely *mulatas* left behind.

The *popular habanera* embraced exotic themes of adventure in tropical lands. Sánchez Fuentes’s *Tú* combined a sensual vocal melody with an exotic and amorous text. The song positioned the habanera to be a musical genre effective in the “exaltation of women, of nature, and the Cuban landscape.”⁹³ Bakhtiarova explains:

The exotic phraseology created a link with an overseas tropical paradise not only for those who participated in overseas “adventure,” but also for those who never left their small native towns. Paradoxically, the inland population preserved and passed these songs down to the younger generations, even though the exotic vocabulary represented for them not more than a play of imagination.⁹⁴

Eduardo Sánchez Fuentes was born in Havana in 1874. His father was an intellectual and poet who urged Sánchez Fuentes to undergo childhood studies in music

⁹² Betzwieser, “Musical Exoticism,” 323.

⁹³ Casares et al., “Diccionario de la Música Española e Hispanoamericana,” 177.

⁹⁴ Bakhtiarova, “The Iconography of the Catalan Habanera,” 239.

at the Hubert de Blanck conservatory in Havana. The famed Cuban composer Ignacio Cervantes was his first teacher. It was recounted that Sánchez Fuentes was obsessed with a particular melody at a young age. As a teenager, he set his original tune to the habanera rhythm. When asked by a young Cuban socialite (Renee Molina) what the work's name was, he coined its title.⁹⁵ The popularity of *Tú* was immediate and vast. Carpentier stated, "At age of sixteen he had written the most famous habanera, "Tú," a perennial piece, like Ponce's "Estrellita," with extraordinary success in Spain and Latin America. Today it is the quintessential habanera, and it has wiped out the memory of previous habaneras."⁹⁶ During the 1895 War of Cuban Independence, Cubans were regularly heard singing *Tú* with various patriotic texts substituting the original text. The work had gained high appeal and soon appeared in various unauthorized publications in Mexico, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Italy, and Spain. Sánchez Fuentes was sorely affected by this unremunerated reality.⁹⁷

Tú featured a long and sensual melody never seen in prior habanera songs. The text strongly reminisced of Cuba's beauty and exotic Spanish romantic experiences with the *mulatta*. The song was highly popular worldwide, especially in lands embracing the tango. Carpentier summarizes:

It is not by mere chance that this habanera was baptized tango-habanera when it was republished in Paris. Thanks to a spiritual affinity easy to explain, this song became greatly loved in Bueno Aires. In passing, these historical references should not detract from the fact that it is a fine and delicate melody, and then it figures as a centerpiece of Cuba is traditional music.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Elena Pérez Sanjurjo, *Historia de la Música Cubana*, 1a ed. (Miami, Fla: Moderna Poesía, 1986), 534.

⁹⁶ Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, 249.

⁹⁷ Sanjurjo, *Historia de la Música Cubana*, 534.

⁹⁸ Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, 250.

Tú

En Cuba, la isla hermosa
del ardiente sol,
bajo su cielo azul,
adorable trigueña,
de todas las flores
la reina eres tú.

La palma que en el bosque
se mece gentil
tu sueño arrulló,
y un beso de la brisa
al morir de la tarde
te despertó.

Fuego sagrado guarda tu corazón,
el claro cielo su alegría te dio,
y en tus miradas ha confundido Dios,
de tus ojos, la noche y la luz
de los rayos del Sol.

Dulce es la caña pero más lo es tu voz
que la amargura quita del corazón,
y al contemplarte suspira mi laúd
bendiciéndote, hermosa sin par,
porque Cuba eres tú.

—

You

In Cuba, the beautiful island
of the ardent sun,
under her blue skies,
adorable brunette,
of all of the flowers
the Queen is you.

The palm tree in the forest
gently swayed as it
lulled you to sleep,
and a kiss from the breeze,
as the day light died,
has awoken you.

Sacred fire guards your heart,
the clear sky gave you its joy,
and in your gaze, God has combined,
the night in your eyes and the light
from the rays of the sun.

Sweet is the sugar cane, but more so is your voice
that removes bitterness from the heart,
and as I admire you, my lute sighs,
blessing you, beauty unparalleled,
because Cuba is You.

During the early twentieth century, Sánchez Fuentes developed an interest in composing operas with exotic Cuban themes. He traveled to Europe to produce these works. Carpentier explains, “In 1898, after having written a good many songs, Sánchez de Fuentes, at the age of twenty-four, undertook the enterprise that Saumell had left on the drawing table: to write a national [Cuban] opera. The score of *Yumuri* premiered in October of that same year in the Albisu Theater.”⁹⁹ Despite the production of several operas in France and Spain, Sánchez Fuentes’s popularity was best known for *Tú*. Carpentier summarizes:

Fuentes remains, above all a composer of habaneras and songs. In a hundred years, his Cuban melodies will occupy a place of honor in our traditions, quoted as models of certain semipopular genres that were cultivated on the island for forty years. Extremely knowledgeable about the past, Sánchez Fuentes habitually reproduced in his songs certain forgotten rhythmic formulas, infusing them with new life.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Carpentier, 250.

¹⁰⁰ Carpentier, 254.

Chapter 6: Polyphonic Choral Habanera

History

During the twentieth century, the *popular habanera* form became firmly entrenched in the culture of southern Spain. Fishermen on the Spanish Mediterranean treasured the form. They sang these habaneras as they worked on their boats or relaxed in taverns at the end of their day. Luján confirms that fishermen and workers of the cork industries lived on the Spanish coast and sang habaneras. In their songs, these sailors and merchants carried stories of their overseas time in Cuba.¹⁰¹ Thompson vividly details habanera culture in southern Spain:

A roaring fire warmed his tavern when I visited it on a wintry night in 1999. Couples were drinking shots of whiskey and beer. On one side of the fireplace was a shelf full of pamphlets and books—all on the habanera—placed there for browsing. At midnight two men sat down at the table next to the counter. One, gray-haired and debonair, was Castor Pérez Diz. He would sing baritone and play guitar. The other guitarist, with a thick black moustache was Alfons Carreras, the tenor and guitarist. Together they sang of amorous destiny, of Catalan sailors falling in love with black women (mulatas) in Havana, then remembering them fondly back home. Sometimes Carreras pointed to the table, breaking up a phrase with a gestural comma. Pérez sang with his chin on his guitar, partnered with his instrument in a tangolike way. He played his guitar as an extension of his chest, finding strings in his heart, strumming bass with his thumb, the bass figuration that defines habanera.¹⁰²

In Cuba, the habanera was going through a steep decline in popularity at the end of the nineteenth century. The growing interest in *Afro Cubanismo* music trends left the habanera form part of Cuba's musical past. However, Thompson confirms that "the habanera as a song was very much alive in Spain."¹⁰³ Fairley adds, "Originally

¹⁰¹ Bakhtiarova, "The Iconography of the Catalan Habanera," 239.

¹⁰² Robert Farris, Thompson, *Tango*, 119.

¹⁰³ Robert Farris, Thompson, 116.

performed both by solo singers and by groups of fishermen in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Catalonia, habaneras entered the repertory of choirs of fishermen who sang while mending nets or sitting in the tavern on days when the weather was too stormy for them to take to sea.”¹⁰⁴ The lyrics of these *popular habaneras* carried centuries of Spanish tales recounting journeys to exotic Cuba. The songs captured fabled stories of love, conquest, longing, and the Cuban paradise.

During the early twentieth century, Spanish choral societies developed an interest in performing polyphonic arrangements of habaneras. Unfortunately, Bakhtiarova explains this tradition was silenced by dictatorship when “abruptly terminated with the advent of Franco’s regime after 1939. Yet, patrons of fishermen’s taverns of the Coast Brava towns continued to sing habaneras as the only means of entertainment available at the time.”¹⁰⁵ Fortunately, the Spanish fishermen were able to retain elements of the tradition in their singing. Interest in the polyphonic choral habanera settings resumed in the 1950s as the dictatorship relaxed. Local Spanish arrangers continued to set traditional habanera melodies in a primarily unaccompanied, 4-part mixed contrapuntal choral texture. Once again, Spanish community choirs and aficionados began singing these plentiful twentieth-century arrangements. These works were soon classified as *polyphonic choral habaneras*.

The new choral form received a boost from tourism and Spanish choral ensembles searching for exotic music. Bakhtiarova explains:

In the 1940s, with the slow recuperation from the wounds of the civil war, the well to do bourgeoisie of big cities started to go to small fishermen’s villages to

¹⁰⁴ Fairley, “Habanera.”

¹⁰⁵ Bakhtiarova, “The Iconography of the Catalan Habanera,” 235.

spend summer weekends and vacations. These *veraneantes*, summer dwellers who owned or rented second residences on the now fashionable Costa Brava on an annual basis, cultivated and maintained their own collections of habaneras in typed or hand-written song-books.¹⁰⁶

Today, there are regular summer music festivals along the Spanish Mediterranean coast, which feature polyphonic choral habanera contests. Thompson adds:

One of the main centers of contemporary Iberian habanera today is a tiny fishing port on the Costa Brava, northeast of Barcelona: Calella de Palafrugell. Here the habanera *cantatas* take place in the summer. The beach, anchored boats, and nearby arcades serve as found bleachers for *habaneristas* who sing from a brilliantly lit dais. A village of three hundred swells with thousands of visitors, all come to hear habanera. In the winter the cognoscenti gather in cafés to savor the style more privately.¹⁰⁷

Fairley confirms that the polyphonic choral habanera “has received a boost from Catalan autonomy within Spain and is now thriving: many young singers are taking it up, and there are regular summer festivals along the coast, attended mostly by Catalan and Spanish locals and tourists.”¹⁰⁸ One of the most notable habanera festivals today is in Torrevieja, Spain. Each summer, the small coastal city is visited by Spanish locals and tourists to view their annual choral contest known as the Certamen Internacional de Habaneras y Polifonía (International Choral Contest of Habaneras and Polyphony). Every July, music aficionados and highly prepared choirs come to celebrate the polyphonic choral habanera in Torrevieja, Spain.

¹⁰⁶ Bakhtiarova, 237.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Farris, Thompson, *Tango*, 118.

¹⁰⁸ Fairley, “Habanera.”

Analysis

Manuel Massotti Littel (1915-1999) was a Spanish attorney and musician. In his early musical years, he was a solo concert pianist and accompanist for violinists and singers. From 1939 to 1943, Littel was the artistic director of Radio Murcia. Later, he was a professor of music theory at the University of Murcia. Eventually, he became the University's director. Littel specialized in folk music from Murcia and composed numerous mixed choir arrangements using local styles, including the habanera. Several well-regarded Spanish choruses have performed his works. Before his death, Littel received the famed Alfonso X el Sabio award. Littel's 1954 SATB polyphonic choral habanera arrangement of *Tú* by Eduardo Sánchez Fuentes (see appendix F) was featured at the 1955 inaugural Certamen Internacional de Habaneras y Polifonía. His arrangement introduced various elements, which set the standard for the polyphonic choral habanera genre.

The following overview outlines the most salient features of Littel's choral habanera arrangement of *Tú*. The arrangement is set in the key of F minor and uses the habanera's characteristic duple meter. In the introduction (mm. 1–8), the tenors and basses hum (*bocca chiusa*) melodic figures, which will later be explored in the lush melodies sung by the sopranos and altos. Before the conclusion of the introduction, fermatas in m. 7 serve to intensify the romantic style of the work and create a desire to resolve the lengthened dominant harmony. The basses release the tension and conclude the section with the appearance of the much-expected habanera ostinato bass line in mm. 8–10. This gesture necessarily serves to define the habanera form.

The somber F minor tonality continues in the verse (m. 11), with all vocal parts now entering. This section features the soprano and alto parts melancholically singing (in parallel thirds) the famed melody originally penned by Sánchez Fuentes in 1890. As the lush melody unfolds, the tenors and basses accompany in the habanera style throughout most of the work using an interlocked part-writing style. The indicated articulation and dynamic marks added to the tenor and bass parts function to bring out the characteristic habanera rhythmic syncopations. The tenors play an additional prominent role by providing echoing gestures (mm. 19, 29, 37, 45, 49, 53, and 61), which conclude the work's larger phrases. By and large, the luxurious minor melody, languid tempo, and accompanying habanera rhythm found in the A section serve to effectively recall the longing of Spanish travel to Cuba and reminisce of long-lost love with a *mulatta*. The opening verse lyrics by Fernan Sánchez vividly depict the scene.

En Cuba, la isla hermosa
del ardiente sol,
bajo su cielo azul,
adorable trigueña,
de todas las flores
la reina eres tú.

—
In Cuba, the beautiful island
of the ardent sun,
under her blue skies,
adorable brunette,
of all of the flowers
the Queen is you.

In the B section (mm. 30–61), the tonality surprisingly shifts to the parallel major (F). The tenors provocatively introduce the modulation a measure prior (m. 29) with the insertion of A♯ in one of their many echoing gestures. The major tonality

appropriately pairs with the more hopeful text that recounts how “the clear sky gave you its joy.” These features serve to give a distinct character to this contrasting section. The parallel major modulation found in the work would become a feature of subsequent polyphonic choral habanera arrangements. The inspirational lyrics of the B section serve to characterize it.

Fuego sagrado guarda tu corazón,
el claro cielo su alegría te dio,
y en tus miradas ha confundido Dios,
de tus ojos, la noche y la luz
de los rayos del Sol.

Dulce es la caña
pero más lo es tu voz
que la amargura quita del corazón,
y al contemplarte suspira mi laúd
bendiciéndote, hermosa sin par,
porque Cuba eres tú.

Sacred fire guards your heart,
the clear sky gave you its joy,
and in your gaze, God has combined,
the night in your eyes and the light
from the rays of the sun.

Sweet is the sugar cane,
but more so is your voice
that removes bitterness of the heart,
and as I admire you, my lute sighs,
blessing you, beauty unparalleled,
because Cuba is You.

In m. 41, the B section is strikingly punctuated by a diminished seventh chord ($\text{vii}^{\circ 7}/\text{V}$) in second inversion. This characteristic chord becomes a highlight of the work and returns twice throughout the B section (m. 41 and m. 62). Each time the diminished chord appears, it is paired with a profound lyric held over a longer rhythm. For

example, it is linked with the word “God” in m. 41, and “lute” in m. 57. At the B section’s conclusion, the return to the parallel F minor key is prepared in m. 61, by the tenors who sensually reintroduce an A₂ just before the m. 10 *da capo* repeat. At this moment, the work is required to be fully repeated, but uses the next verse’s text. The lyrics once again reminisce of Cuba’s beautiful landscape and long-lost love with a *mulatta*.

La palma que en el bosque
se mece gentil
tu sueño arrulló,
y un beso de la brisa
al morir de la tarde
te despertó.

—

The palm tree in the forest
gently swayed as it
lulled you to sleep,
and a kiss from the breeze,
as the day light died,
has awoken you.

An overview of the bipartite form of the work reveals a consistent eight-measure phrase structure. The verse (m. 11) first exposes the phrasing, but couples it with additional two-measure phrases concluding each of the larger phrases (8+2, 8+2). These two-measure phrase additions are characterized by descending melodic gestures sung by the tenors. The phrase structure of the contrasting B section (m. 31) is defined by two larger sixteen-measure groupings, which can be subdivided into three smaller phrase groupings (8+3+5). The entire work culminates with a C section (mm. 62–65), which functions as a brief codetta. This four-measure section provides climactic impact. Dramatic fermatas enhance its closure in m. 64, which serve to create a desire for

ultimate resolution of the prolonged V^7 harmony. The fermatas are first found in m. 64 on the 'hollow' interval of the fifth in the bass part. At this moment, a crescendo in all parts rushes to a grand resolution of tension into a fully voiced F major chord in an open spacing, which excitingly concludes the habanera. A full overview of the work's prominent features can be found in the appendix G chart.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

The goal of this document was to expand awareness of the polyphonic choral habanera and its exotic repertoire. The document aimed to discover the origin and evolution of the form, which captivantly documented Spanish travel history to Cuba. Early Cuban history revealed that the Spanish conquest of 1492 brought Iberian culture, music, and dance to the island. The yearlong British occupation in 1762 introduced the country dance to Cuba. Four decades later, the Haitian Revolution introduced the contredanse to Cuba. These sister dances fused to give birth to the Cuban contradanza, which evolved with African rhythms and dances introduced by slaves.

Cuban composers became interested in composing elaborate instrumental music based on the contradanza rhythm, which resulted in several important works. *San Pascual Bailón* solidified the habanera rhythm, while *La Paloma* inspired the habanera song. *Tú* commenced the *popular habanera* form, which influenced several types of music and dances, most prominently noted in the Argentinian tango. Both the habanera and tango migrated to Europe. These forms inspired several composers in Spain and France who were searching to incorporate exoticism in their music. The habanera genre divided into the *concert habanera* and *popular habanera* classifications. The *popular habanera* form was propelled through the admiration of Eduardo Sánchez Fuentes's *Tú*. Spanish fishermen embraced the *popular habanera* on the Mediterranean coast. The fishermen, along with Spanish choral societies, arrangers, tourists, and habanera choral festivals on Spain's southern coast, contributed to the polyphonic choral habanera's inception.

Analysis of Manuel Massotti Littel's SATB polyphonic choral habanera arrangement of *Tú* by Eduardo Sánchez Fuentes permitted a deeper understanding of the form. The work is one of the most celebrated and representative of the polyphonic choral habanera literature. This document's effort ultimately hoped to provide new repertoire options for audiences and ensembles, searching for a novel and exotic choral repertoire. Manuel best concludes:

The choral habanera bore its own evocations, romanticizing Cuba as a land of tropical breezes, languid afternoons in the hammock, and sensual *mulatas*. The associations of the zarzuela habanera/tango, for its part, might naturally vary in accordance with the lyrics, but sensuous, sultry rhythm established its own expressive mood, and Bizet's habanera, like the choral habaneras, set the Orient in Andalusia, with the olive-complected gypsy Carmen as the seductive and dangerous Other.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 103.

Bibliography

- Bakhtiarova, Galina. "The Iconography of the Catalan Habanera: Indianos, Mulatas and Postmodern Emblems of Cultural Identity." *Music in Art* 35, no. 1/2 (2010): 233–43.
- Béhague, Gerard. *Music in Latin America*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1979.
- Bethell, Leslie. *Cuba: A Short History*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Betzwieser, Thomas. "Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections - By Ralph P. Locke: Book Reviews." *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, no. 2 (2012): 274–275.
- Burkholder, J. Peter. "Music of the Americas and Historical Narratives." *American Music* 27, no. 4 (2009): 399–423.
- Cañizares Llanes, Manuel. "La Habanera en Torrevieja: Patrimonio Cultural Imaginado," 2013. <http://dspace.umh.es/handle/11000/1476>.
- Carpentier, Alejo. *Music in Cuba*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- Casares, Emilio, José López-Calo, Ismael Fernández de la Cuesta, and María Luz González Peña. "Diccionario de la Música Española e Hispanoamericana." Vol. 6. Madrid: Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 2000.
- Fairley, Jan. "Habanera." Grove Music Online, n.d. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000012116>.
- Gift, Virginia. *Tango: A History of an Obsession*. BookSurge, 2008.
- Grenet, Emilio. *Popular Cuban Music*. Revisionist Press, 1985.
- Grunklee, Dana. "The Meaning of Tango: The Story of the Argentinian Dance" 30, no. 8 (2008): 86–86.
- Lapique Becali, Zoila. *Música colonial cubana en las publicaciones periódicas (1812-1902)*. Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1979.
- Locke, Ralph P. *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Locke, Ralph P. "On Exoticism, Western Art Music, and the Words We Use." *Archiv Für Musikwissenschaft* 69, no. 4 (2012): 318–328.
- Manuel, Peter. *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*. Studies in Latin American and Caribbean Music. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009.
- . "From Contradanza to Son: New Perspectives on the Prehistory of Cuban Popular Music." *Latin American Music Review* 30, no. 2 (2009): 184–212.
- . "Music in Cuba (Review)." *Cultural Critique* 49, no. 1 (January 1, 2001): 186–87.

- Patronato municipal de Habaneras y Polifonía de Torre Vieja. "Partituras de Habaneras." Partituras de Habaneras, n.d. <https://habaneras.org/partituras.htm>.
- Pichardo, Esteban. *Diccionario Provincial de Voces Cubanas*. Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno, 1861.
- Popkin, Jeremy D. *A Concise History of the Haitian Revolution*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.
- Publishers Weekly. "Tango: The Art History of Love" 252, no. 27 (2005): 72.
- Rey, Mario. "The Rhythmic Component of 'Afrocubanismo' in the Art Music of Cuba." *Black Music Research Journal* 26, no. 2 (2006): 181–212.
- Robert Farris, Thompson. *Tango: The Art History of Love*. 1st ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 2005.
- Sánchez, Francisco. "La Habanera: Evolución Social, Musical y Pedagógica en Torre Vieja." *Objetivo Torre Vieja* (blog), 2010. <https://objetivotorrevieja.wordpress.com/2010/12/10/presentada-la-tesis-doctoral-%e2%80%9cla-habanera-evolucion-social-musical-y-pedagogica-en-torrevieja-%e2%80%9d/>.
- Sanjurjo, Elena Pérez. *Historia de la Música Cubana*. 1a ed. Miami, Fla: Moderna Poesía, 1986.
- Sharp, Cecil James. *The Country Dance Book*. London: Novello and Company, 1909.
- The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Wright, Irene A. "Review of The Early History of Cuba, 1492-1586." *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (1918): 327–30.
- Wright, Irene A. *The Early History of Cuba, 1492-1586*. Macmillan, 1916.
- Zoumaras, Thomas. "Cuba: A Short History: Bethell, Leslie, Ed.: New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 172 Pp., Publication Date: June 1993." *History: Reviews of New Books* 22, no. 3 (1994): 117–117.

Appendix A: Polyphonic Choral Habanera Repertoire

<https://habaneras.org/partituras.htm>

In SATB unaccompanied voicing (otherwise noted)

* alternate version with piano accompaniment available

A

A tu lado
Adiós Torrevieja
Al Compás de Habanera Alborada *
Alborada
Allá en mi cuba
Aquel Instante
Aunque no (Equal Voices)
Aurora (SATTB)
A mi “Añoransa” (SATB), (SSAA), (TTBB)
Amor esto es amor (SATB)

B

Barquito de Sal (SATB), (SSAA) *
Blanca Gaviota *
Blanco Velero (Equal Voices)

C

Caminos en el mar *
Cantándote Habaneras
Caridad del cobre
Con sabor tropical *
Contigo velero
Cubanita preciosa (Equal Voices)
Cubana y española (SATB), (SSAA)

D

De la habana son (SATB), (Equal Voices)
Déjadme (SATB), (SSAA)
Dicen que se muere el mar (SATB), (Equal Voices)
Dique de Levante
Dónde están las gaviotas (SATB), (SSAA), (TTBB)

E

Eco habanera
El abanico
El ausente
El sabor de una habanera (SATB), (Equal Voices)
El ruiseñor y la flor (SATB), (SSAA), (TTBB)

El viejo puerto
Era una flor
Estrella de mar (SSAA)

F
Flores de amor

G
Gaviotas
Gorrioncillos (SATB), (TTBB)

H
Habana Linda *
Habanera salada (SATB), (Equal Voices)
Huellas en la arena

I
Íntima (Equal Voices)

J, K, L
La Borrachita
La cubana del manglar *
La Paloma (Treble)
La voz de mi estrella
Leyenda marinera
Linda mulata
Los camagueyanos
La Llamada (SATB), (SSAA), (TTBB)
La dulce habanera (SSAA)

M
Marinero
Mariposita de Primavera (Equal Voices)
Melodías antillanas
Mi querida Torre vieja (SATB), (Equal Voices)
Mi bella Lola (Equal Voices)
Mensaje de Paz (Equal Voices)

N
Niña de marianao
Niña merse
No lo esperes
No lo esperes

Ñ, O, P

Para siempre Torre Vieja
Por el mar
Prueba de amor (SSAA)

Q

Que bonita es Cuba (SSA), (Equal Voices)

R

Renaces tú *
Ritmo de la habanera
Rosita de un verde palmar
Rosita

S

Son tus ojos (SATTB)
Sonando junto al mar

T

Torre Vieja
Tú
Tú, mi barco y el mar
Testigo de amor (Equal Voices)
Torre Vieja en mi corazón (SATB), (SSAA), (TTBB)

U, V, W, X, Y, Z

Un barco llega
Volver soñar
Voy en busca del olvido *

Appendix B: San Pascual Bailón

First instrumental habanera (1803)

"SAN PASCUAL BAILON"
Contradanza.

1803

A. López:

Habana.

Obrapía núm. 23.

(Trompas)

PIANO.

The musical score is written for piano in a 2/4 time signature with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three systems of music. The first system begins with a treble clef and a bass clef, with a brace on the left. The first measure of the treble staff contains a quarter note G4, followed by a double bar line. The bass staff has a quarter rest. The second system continues the melody in the treble staff with eighth notes and a quarter note, while the bass staff has a quarter rest. The third system concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign, with first and second endings indicated by '1.' and '2.' above the treble staff.

First system of musical notation, featuring a treble and bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The treble staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

Second system of musical notation, continuing the piece with similar melodic and harmonic development in the treble and bass staves.

Third system of musical notation, showing further progression of the musical themes.

Fourth system of musical notation, concluding the piece with a final cadence in the treble staff and a fermata in the bass staff.

Appendix C: El Amor en el Baile

First habanera song (1842)

LA PRENSA
Nº 1

HABANA.
Categoría de
Ballet y Trepante.

1842

EL AMOR EN EL BAILE.
NUEVA
CANCIÓN HABANERA,
PUESTA EN MÚSICA CON ACOMPAÑAMIENTO DE PIANO
POR UN VUELTAS—ADEENTRO.—C.P.

Allegretto. Scherzoso.

CANTO

Yo soy ni-ña, soy do-
ni-lla, yel pe- sar no ro-ñe-éij. Yo soy ni-ña, soy do- ni-lla, yel pe- sar no co-ñe-éij.
Pero a-noche ¡ay mi-ñita! Yo no sé lo que sen-tí, que bai-lan-do la dan-za.

41.

The image shows a page of a musical score. At the top, there is a decorative title box containing the text 'EL AMOR EN EL BAILE' in a large, stylized font. Below this, it says 'NUEVA CANCIÓN HABANERA, PUESTA EN MÚSICA CON ACOMPAÑAMIENTO DE PIANO POR UN VUELTAS—ADEENTRO.—C.P.'. To the left of the title box is the text 'LA PRENSA Nº 1' and to the right is 'HABANA. Categoría de Ballet y Trepante.' and the year '1842'. Below the title box, the tempo and mood are indicated as 'Allegretto. Scherzoso.'. The score begins with a vocal line labeled 'CANTO' and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The score consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: 'Yo soy ni-ña, soy do- ni-lla, yel pe- sar no ro-ñe-éij. Yo soy ni-ña, soy do- ni-lla, yel pe- sar no co-ñe-éij. Pero a-noche ¡ay mi-ñita! Yo no sé lo que sen-tí, que bai-lan-do la dan-za.' The page number '41.' is at the bottom center.

Appendix D: La Paloma by Sebastián Iradier

Influential habanera song (1879)

La Paloma.
(DIE TAUBE.)

Iradier.

Allegretto.

PIANO.

— an an Bord, an we-le ein frischer Wind. Zur Mat-ter sprach ich: o
he-le nun für dein Kind. Und drun-ten am grü-nen Ma-gen, da sah ich
sie. Ein Wort sagte der Tre-cke an-ge, ich trag' es nie!

Appendix E: Original Title Page of Tú

Habanera song by Eduardo Sánchez Fuentes



ANSELMO LOPEZ, EDITOR
HABANA
Obispo 127.

Appendix F: Tú by Eduardo Sánchez Fuentes

Polyphonic choral habanera (SATB) by Manuel Massotti Littel

TU Habanera

Letra: FERNAN SANCHEZ
Música: E. SANCHEZ FUENTES
Transcripción para coro a voces mixtas:
MANUEL MASSOTTI LITTEL

Tpº de Habanera lento

Musical score for Soprano, Contralto, Tenor, and Bass parts, measures 1-4. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The Soprano and Contralto parts are mostly rests. The Tenor part begins with a *pp* dynamic and a *B.C.* marking. The Bass part begins with a *pp* dynamic and a *B.C.* marking.

Musical score for Soprano, Contralto, Tenor, and Bass parts, measures 5-8. The Soprano and Contralto parts have a whole note rest in measure 5. The Tenor part has a melodic line with a *B.C.* marking in measure 8. The Bass part has a melodic line with a *B.C.* marking in measure 8.

Musical score for Soprano, Contralto, Tenor, and Bass parts, measures 9-10. The score includes lyrics and dynamics. A box around measure 10 indicates a first ending. The lyrics are: "En Cu - ba La_is-la_her - mo - sa del" for Soprano and Contralto, and "La la la la la la" for Tenor and Bass. Dynamics include *pp* and *B.C.*

13

S. ar - dien - te sol ba - jo su cie - lo_a - zul a - do - ra - ble tri -

C. ar - dien - te sol ba - jo su cie - lo_a - zul a - do - ra - ble tri -

T. la la la la la la la la la la la la

B. la la la la la la la la la la

17

S. gue - ña de to - das sus flo - res la rei - na_e - res tú. *pp* En

C. gue - ña de to - das sus flo - res la rei - na_e - res tú. *pp* En

T. la la la la la la la la la la

B. la la la la la la la la la la

21

S. Cu - ba La_is - la_her - mo - sa del ar - dien - te sol ba - jo su cie - lo_a -

C. Cu - ba La_is - la_her - mo - sa del ar - dien - te sol ba - jo su cie - lo_a -

T. *pp* La la la la la la la la la la

B. *pp* la la la la la la la la la la

25

S. *zul* a-do-ra-ble tri-gue-ña de to-das sus flo-res la rei-na_e-res

C. *zul* a-do-ra-ble tri-gue-ña de to-das sus flo-res la rei-na_e-res

T. la la la la la la la la la la la la

B. la la la la la la la la

29

30

S. tú. *f* Fue-go sa-gra-do guar-da tu co-ra-

C. tú. *f* Fue-go sa-gra-do guar-da tu co-ra-

T. la la la *f* la la la la la la

B. la *f* La la la la la

33

S. zón *p* el cla-ro cie-lo *f* su_a-le-grí-a te

C. zón *p* el cla-ro cie-lo *f* su_a-le-grí-a te

T. la la la *p* cla-ro cie-lo *f* cie-lo

B. la *p* la cla-ro cie-lo *f* a-le-grí-

37

S. dió y_en tus mi - ra - das ha con-fun - di - do

C. dió y_en tus mi - ra - das ha con-fun - di - do

T. su_a-le-grí - a te dió mi - ra-das con - fun-dió

B. a te dió mi - ra - das con - - fun - dió

41

S. Dios *p* de tus o - jos la no-che_y la luz

C. Dios *p* de tus o - jos la no-che_y la luz

T. Dios *p* de tus o - jos la no-che_y la luz

B. Dios La luz de

44

S. de los ra - yos del sol. *f* Dul-ce_es la ca - ña

C. de los ra - yos del sol. *f* Dul-ce_es la ca - ña

T. de los sol. ra - yos del sol. *ff* de los ra - yos del

B. los ra - - - yos del sol. la la

48

S. pe - ro más lo_es tu voz *p* que la_a - mar - gu__ ra

C. pe - ro más lo_es tu voz *p* que la_a - mar - gu - ra

T. sol. guar - da tu cla - ro la_a - - mar - gu__ ra

B. la la la la la_a - - - mar - gu - ra

52

S. qui - ta del co - ra - zón *f* y_al con - tem - plar - te

C. qui - ta del co - ra - zón *f* y_al con - tem - plar - te

T. qui - ta qui - ta del co - ra - zón sus - pi - ra

B. quí - ta del co - - ra - - - zón sus - pi - ra

56

S. sus - pi - ra mi la - úd *p* ben - di - cién - do - te _ her - mo - sa sin par

C. sus - pi - ra mi la - úd *p* ben - di - cién - do - te _ her - mo - sa sin par

T. con mi la - - - úd *p* La la la

B. con mi la - úd *p* La la la

60

S. *pp* por-que Cu - ba_e-res tú. *f* Ben - di - cién - do-te_her -

C. *pp* por-que Cu - ba_e-res tú. *f* Ben - di - cién - do-te_her -

T. *pp* Cu - - - ba tú BC *f* Ben - di - cién - do-te_her -

B. *pp* Cu - - - ba tú BC *f* Ben - di - cién - do-te_her -

63

S. mo - sa sin par *ff* por - que Cu - ba_e - res tú.

C. mo - sa sin par *ff* por - que Cu - ba_e - res tú.

T. mo - sa sin par *ff* por - que Cu - ba_e - res tú.

B. mo - sa sin par *ff* Es tú.

