UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

TANGO AND ART MUSIC: AN ANALYSIS OF CLAUDIA MONTERO'S PIANO CONCERTO *EN BLANCO Y NEGRO*

A DOCUMENT

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR IN MUSICAL ARTS

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Norman, Oklahoma

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TANGO AND ART MUSIC:
AN ANALYSIS OF CLAUDIA MONTERO'S PIANO CONCERTO
EN BLANCO Y NEGRO

A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR
THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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Acknowledgments

This document encompasses many different topics that in a way or another, I always wanted to research. The use of tango among Argentine composers is a fascinating topic that even has been previously researched, still presents many facets worth exploring. Researching Claudia Montero's piano concerto *En Blanco y Negro* was an incredible experience that I was not expecting at this stage of my studies. For that, I would like to thank most especially to Dr. Sara Ernst, who encouraged me to make Claudia Montero's work the topic of my dissertation. I also thank Dr. Igor Lipinski and Dr. Vivian Luong for supporting me along the way by offering me insights that improved this document meaningfully. I am grateful to Dr. Meagan Hennessey for reminding me that the purpose of the research shapes its development. In addition to my committee, I would like to thank Dr. Chris Baumgartner, whose support was invaluable as well.

The research presented in this document could have not been taken place without the support of Eurindia Edizioni and Mtro. Marcelo Alvarez, the director of Eurindia Edizioni. Eurindia Edizioni authorized the publication of excerpts from the piano concerto, which are essential to present the analysis of the piece. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Mercedes Montero, Claudia Montero's sister. Mercedes Montero facilitated the access Claudia Montero's musical archive.

Beyond specific guidance that I received to do this document I would like to express my gratitude to all my friends who supported me to continue with my studies: Luz, Olivia, Pia, Ofelia, Emily, Meldy, Belem, Adri, Juan Mario, Nedim, Laura, Liam, and Toya. I also want to thank my editor, Jadyn Halford, whose observations improved the presentation of my research. They all were present at key moments of the past year. Finally, I thank to my parents, Graciela

Hoffman and Victor Fainstein, whose passion for knowledge and resilience is at the heart of my being, and they were an inspiration throughout my journey.

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Abstract

In Argentina, Western music developed in the beginning of the nineteenth century, and by the end of the nineteenth century, the two nationalistic "waves" of composers had institutionalized the use of folk music as the vernacular source of inspiration, hence representing the identity of Argentine composers. Eventually, Argentine tango—a style that blended cultural traditions of Afro-Argentines, European immigrants, and even rural areas—became a vernacular style that composers intended to use. However, the lack of social acceptance of tango discouraged composers from incorporating this style in their compositions. After Astor Piazzolla (1912–1992), tango became fully accepted among Western music composers. Claudia Montero (1962–2021) composed *En Blanco y Negro* [In White and Black], which was premiered in 2017 and was the first piano concerto based on tango as a vernacular source of inspiration, notably by a woman composer. This document analyzes the concerto's unique features in the context of Argentine music history, Claudia Montero's output, and modern times. Chapter 1 presents an overview of the topic, the justification of the study, the purpose of the study, the limitations of the study, an outline of the study, and includes a comprehensive literature review. Chapter 2 provides an overview of Argentine music history, including Western music composers and tango's evolution from the nineteenth century to the end of the 1990s. Additionally, it surveys the stylistic features of Argentine tango and art music, the history of the piano concerto, and the development of the piano concerto in Argentine piano literature. Chapter 3 presents the life and works of Claudia Montero. The first part of Chapter 3 is a biographical sketch, and the second part is an overview of Montero's works, with emphasis on her solo piano music and stylistic features. Chapter 4 contains the analysis of the three movements of *En Blanco y Negro*. The first movement presents a seven-part rondo form, the second movement is a theme with variations,

and the third movement is in compound ternary form. This is score for piano and string orchestra, and all the cadenzas are notated. The tango elements include 3-3-2 rhythm patterns, embellished melodies including the use of the "green note," contrapuntal textures, ternary form (in the third movement), and an instrumentation which includes string instruments, a timbre associated with tango. Chapter 5 presents the final conclusions based on the significance and the characteristics of the piano concerto; additionally, it introduces suggestions for future research. Finally, Chapter 5 ties together the historical narrative of tango with Claudia Montero's contributions, considering her impact as a woman composer and interpreting the title *En Blanco Negro*.

Chapter 1: Claudia Montero's Concerto *En Blanco y Negro*

Argentine music history contains a fascinating mosaic of composers whose oeuvre not only reflects the individual creativity of each composer but also mirrors the cultural movements of every epoch. These artistic trends are the result of a confluence of socioeconomic factors, government policies, and the composer's constant quest for an authentic "Argentine" and individual identity in their works. Although Argentine music history is traceable from the Colonial Period (1536–1809), the most substantial development of Argentine music history starts in the second half of the nineteenth century, during the Centennial period (1810–1930).[1] At the time, the intellectual elite of the country projected a transition towards modernity, which included an immigration campaign from Europe. As a result, the national identity of the country developed a diverse population that included the creole community,[2] the incoming immigrants, the first Americans of the country, and the Afro-Argentines. Despite their musical contributions, those last two demographic groups remained out of the public eye during the twentieth century; yet the music of the first Americans of the country and the Afro-Argentines has begun to be properly acknowledged in the last few decades.[3] This is relevant because tango—which was only linked with the immigration waves of the beginning of the twentieth century—in fact had a more complex birth than originally believed. Tango remained as a marginalized style for the most part

[1] Andrea Gabriela Fusco Morales, "Bases del Nacionalismo Musical en la Argentina," [Foundations of the Musical Nationalism in Argentina], *Antec: Revista Peruana de Investigación Musical* 7, no. 2 (December 2023): 102, https://doi.org/10.62230/antec.v7i2.200.

[2] In the context of this document, the word "creole" will mean to be descendant of Europeans, who was born in ancient Spanish territories during the Colonial Period.

[3] From the 1990s, the Argentine anthropologist Pablo Cirio has conducted extensive research about the intertextuality and juxtaposition of Afro-Argentine culture during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

of the twentieth century, therefore Western Art music composers remained indifferent to tango as a vernacular source of inspiration. Over one hundred years the first piano concerto by an Argentine composer, Claudia Montero wrote the piano concerto *En Blanco y Negro*, the first piano concerto inspired by tango.

In the context of the social changes of the late Centennial period, the intellectual elite and the establishment of the time tried to redefine the national identity by incorporating the *gaucho* (a South American horseman or cowhand) and its mythology into art works.[4] The first wave of nationalistic composers, led by Alberto Williams (1852–1952) and Julian Aguirre (1868–1924),[5] realized that the gateway to developing an original stylistic signature was to include national vernacular elements into their music. That is how, in the subsequent years, composers started to incorporate folk tunes, especially from Las Pampas [The Pampas], the region in which Buenos Aires—the capital of Argentina—is located. In subsequent years, the use of folk tunes started to be "institutionalized," which use of folk tunes as a source of inspiration almost a mandatory practice among Argentine composers.[6]

During the first half of the twentieth century, a group of composers called Grupo Renovación [Renovation Group] initially integrated by Juan Carlos Paz (1897–1972), Jacobo

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[4] Roberto Buffo, "La Problemática del Nacionalismo Musical Argentino" [The Issue of Argentine Musical Nationalism], *Revista del Instituto de Investigación Musicológica Carlos Vega*, no. 31 (2017):15–54, https://repositorio.uca.edu.ar/handle/123456789/1309.

[5] Juan María Veniard, *La Música Nacional Argentina: Influencia de la Música Criolla Tradicional en la Música Académica Argentina* [The Argentine National Music: The Influence of Creole Music into Argentine Western Art music] (Buenos Aires: Instituto Nacional de Musicología Carlos Vega, 1986).

[6] Guillermo Scarabino, *El Grupo Renovación (1929–1944) y la "Nueva Música" en la Argentina del Siglo XX*, [The Renovation Group (1929–1944) and the "New Music" of Argentina in the Twentieth Century] (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Universidad Católica Argentina, 2000), 30.

Ficher (1896–1978), Juan José Castro (1895–1968), Gilardo Gilardi (1889–1963), and José Maria Castro (1892–1964), questioned the canon imposed from prior generations of composers. The musical influences of these composers were more modern; therefore, the incorporation of tango occurred with different compositional approaches. The influence of Neoclassicism made a significant impact on the way composers conceived their works.[7] Additionally, direct contact with the style, especially with tango became a fundamental requirement for these composers. In other words, composers needed to play and perform tango in order to get acquainted with it. Therefore, the incorporation of tango was relatively welcome,[8] yet none of these composers used tango as a source of inspiration for their piano concertos.[9]

The incorporation of tango in Argentine Western Art music was not fully accepted until Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992), a composer who revolutionized the Argentine music scene and changed it forever. The incorporation of tango as a vernacular source of inspiration became totally accepted, if not fostered by a society that, little by little, recognized that tango was always part of the national identity, especially for the populations of Buenos Aires and the Río de la Plata region. But it is important to clarify that even though Piazzolla had a substantial impact on Argentine music, his musical output consisted of compositions for the ensembles he performed with. His solo piano pieces mostly follow traditional parameters of composition; that is to say,

[7] The use of clear and "classical" forms was an important principle among the composers of the Grupo Renovación, especially for Juan José Castro and José Maria Castro.

[8] Scarabino, *Grupo Renovación*, 28.

[9] The Argentine composer Juan José Castro wrote *Tangos* (1941), a suite of five movements that was one of the most significant solo piano pieces in Argentine music history inspired by tango.

they are inspired by folk tunes.[10] His solo piano music includes very few pieces based on tango, and none of them are piano concertos.

The development of piano repertoire in Argentina was intimately related to the evolution of Argentine music history. Despite this, interest in the piano concerto started relatively later, during the twentieth century. The main historical representatives of the genre in the country are Ernesto Drangosch (1882–1925), Juan José Castro (1895–1968), Alberto Ginastera (1916–1983), Carlos Guastavino (1912–2000), and Gerardo Gandini (1936–2013). Even though all these composers delivered iconic piano concertos, none of them are based upon tango.

The piano concerto by Claudia Montero, called *En Blanco y Negro* [In Black and White] (2017), was inspired by tango. Montero belongs to a generation that grew up listening to and seeing the development of the composer and bandoneon player Astor Piazzolla; and like many other composers of her generation, she openly embraced Piazzolla's influence. The music catalog of Claudia Montero includes compositions for different types of solo instruments, ensembles, and orchestra pieces. Among the piano works of her output, Montero composed four pieces for piano solo and chamber works that include piano.[11] All her music presents a deep connection with Argentine tango. Despite the immense influence of Astor Piazzolla, Claudia Montero developed her own compositional signatures. Her premature death in 2021, at the age of 58, left an entire community of pianists and musicians with the wish to have more repertoire to enjoy, perform, and analyze.

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[10] The pianist Natalia González Figueroa recorded an album with Piazzolla unknown piano solo compositions called *Piazzolla: Obras Desconocidas para Piano Solo* (Virtuoso Records, 2021).

[11] Claudia Montero, "Musical Catalogue," accessed December 20, 2025, https://www.claudiamontero.net/catalogue.

Claudia Montero's piano concerto, *En Blanco y Negro*, was premiered in Ireland in 2017, at the Galway International Arts Festival by the pianist Clare Hammond, accompanied by the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, conducted by David Brophy.[12] Subsequently, the concerto was recorded by the pianist Allison Brewster Franzetti with the City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Carlos Franzetti.[13] Two years later, the Argentine pianist Nélida Sánchez premiered the concerto with the Orquesta de Cámara Juvenil de Buenos Aires [Youth Chamber Orchestra of Buenos Aires], conducted by Alejandro Beraldi. After Montero's death, the pianist Natalia Gonzalez Figueroa performed the concerto accompanied by Ensamble Ecléctico [Eclectic Ensemble] conducted by Lucia Zicos. Later, Mercedes Montero—Claudia Montero's twin sister—produced an album called *Sueños Sublimes* [Sublime Dreams] (2022), in which Gonzalez Figueroa and Zicos recorded the concerto.

It is noteworthy that Montero composed expressive works, intertwining Western music compositional techniques with Argentine tango. The fact that the source of inspiration of this piano concerto is influenced by a music style that traditionally was dismissed, or historically in dispute, constitutes an important contribution that reconnects Argentine Western music with its society. What is more, the international premiere and the enthusiastic reception both by critics and audiences makes scholarly research essential on such innovative music work, and the composer, who is a significant representative of the contemporary Argentine music scene.

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[12] Jake Morgan, "Two Americas United," *The Journal of Music*, August 28, 2017, https://journalofmusic.com/criticism/two-americas-united.

[13] Claudia Montero, *Concierto En Blanco y Negro for Piano and String Orchestra: Enérgico*, with Allison Brewster Franzetti (piano), and The City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Carlos Franzetti, Spotify streaming audio, https://open.spotify.com/intl-es/album/5XaveCxnuOXeevHlbdBYfH.

Justification for the Study

Given that the birth of Western music occurred in Europe, many Latin American composers from different parts of the continent have been disregarded, underrated, or not taken into consideration due to belonging to a peripheral country.[14] The footprint of colonialism and racism was also embedded in the birth of Western music, and for quite long time, Latin American composers were dismissed even in their own land.[15] This is true for Argentine composers as well.[16]

Modern times have brought a more diverse approach and curiosity towards contemporary composers. Moreover, the artistic global community has made efforts to bring composers from minorities or underrepresented groups to the programs of concert halls, in addition to the research conducted by the scholarly community and the performance of this repertoire at higher education institutions and independent studios. In the case of Claudia Montero, an award winning composer whose works have been performed in distinguished concert halls it is

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[14] Center and periphery are socioeconomic concepts described by the Argentine economist Raúl Prebisch in his book *El Desarrollo Económico de América Latina y Algunos de sus Principales Problemas* [The Economic Development of Latin America and their Main Problems] (SCL: CEPAL, 2012). The theory that presents these concepts establishes that the center is constituted by industrialized countries, and the periphery is constituted by the producers of goods, dependent of the centric countries. In terms of culture and music history, the development of Western Art music mirrors this phenomenon, because the birth of Western Art music occurred in Western Europe, and the subsequent development classical music in other Latin American nations occurred later.

[15] The composer Ernest Ansermet (1883–1969) wrote two articles published *Sur*, an important magazine about culture in Argentina between 1931–1992. In these articles Ansermet criticized the incorporation of folk tunes into Western Art music. Although this necessarily did not apply for the incorporation of tango into Western Art music, it set a precedent on how the Argentine music community perceived their own musical patrimony.

[16] Ernest Ansermet, "Los Problemas del Compositor Americano: El Compositor y su Tierra," [The Issues of the American Composer: The Composer and his Homeland], *Sur*, 1931: 118.

indispensable for the pianistic community to know about Claudia Montero and her creative endeavors.

Claudia Montero was awarded four Latin Grammy awards on three different occasions. In 2014, Montero won the Best Classical Contemporary Composition for her *Violin Concerto* (accompanied by string orchestra). In 2016, she was awarded in the same category for her *Cuarteto para Buenos Aires* [String Quartet for Buenos Aires]; and in 2018 Montero was awarded in Best Classical Contemporary Composition for her Guitar Concerto called *Luces y Sombras* [Lights and Shadows], and in the category Best Classical Music Album, for *Mágica y Misteriosa* [Magical and Mysterious], an album which included the guitar concerto. Her works have been premiered in prominent venues such as the Palau de la Música de Valencia (Spain), the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., Teatro Colón (Argentina), and at international festivals such as Galway International Arts Festival (Ireland), among other concert venues. Her work as teacher and clinician, also helped Montero become known internationally, besides the interest in her music in artistic circles. Her piano concerto based on tango has set a new precedent for the genre in Argentine Western music because Montero chose to revive music from a different historical period to promote Argentine culture and her individual identity.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the piano concerto *En Blanco y Negro* by Claudia Montero for her compositional signatures, the pianistic technical considerations, and structural characteristics, with the goal of providing performance and pedagogical guidance. The concerto contains three movements. In order to provide performance and pedagogical guidelines, the three movements of each concerto will be analyzed using parameters such as form, harmony, thematic elaboration of the musical gestures and ideas, and instrumentation. Because *En Blanco y Negro*

is a contemporary piece, the analysis will explore which historic conventions of the common practice, and specificities of the genre—the piano concerto—are preserved; and in which musical elements the composer decided to innovate. The observation of the unique features of each movement will help to determine at which stage of artistic development pianists can incorporate these works into their repertoire, and how these pieces can be prepared from a technical and artistic point of view.

In the future, this document will help researchers and teachers understand the incorporation of tango into Argentine Western music through Montero's concerto. Additionally, this research intends to be the gateway to further exploration and analysis of the repertoire of Claudia Montero, including her pieces for piano solo or chamber music with piano. Considering the increasing interest in the composer and her oeuvre, this research will serve as reference material for researchers and teachers wanting context about the composer's style, the pianistic technical and artistic considerations of the concerto, the legacy of historical Argentine composers, in addition to an analysis of how vernacular sources of inspiration were incorporated into Western Art music in Argentina.

Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on the concerto for piano and string orchestra *En Blanco y Negro* by Claudia Montero. To have a broad understanding of the treatment of the piano in the concerto, this document will briefly survey Montero's piano pieces written for piano solo. The discussion of these works will be limited to an overview only to understand her compositional style and how it may be mirrored in the piano concerto. This section will discuss technical considerations

and the leveling of the pieces using Jane Magrath's guidelines presented in *Piano Literature for Teaching and Performance*.[17]

The presentation of the biographical sketch of the composer intends to bring understanding about significant events in the life of the composers and the main influences that shaped her compositional language. In addition to the biography, readers will be able to access file recordings and interviews from diverse sources, presented in the bibliography section of this document.

Review of Related Literature

The related literature for this topic includes the history of Argentine music and its piano literature, the incorporation of tango and folklore in Western Art Music, the history of the piano concerto, and all the relevant information about Claudia Montero's life, including her catalogue of works.

History of Argentine Music and Piano Music

The literature about Argentine music history is not abundant or systematic; however, there is plenty of research presented in varied sources.[18] Since the foundation of the institute of musicology by the National Council of Research, and the Institute Carlos Vega of the Universidad Católica Argentina [Catholic University of Argentina] (UCA), both institutions

[17] Jane Magrath, *Piano Literature for Teaching and Performance* (Kingston, NJ: Piano Education Press, 2021).

[18] Taking into consideration that Spanish is the first language of the writer, and that the topic of the dissertation is intimately related with her Argentine identity, the author used a great deal of resources in her native language. All the translations provided in this document are provided by the writer, unless stated otherwise.

contributed meaningfully to magnify the research about Western Art music and Argentine culture.[19]

The *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* contains an entry written by Gerard Béhague, which summarizes the development of Argentine music in three periods: the Colonial Period (1536–1809); the Nineteenth Century-The Centennial (1810–1930); and the Twentieth Century to modern times.[20]

Another comprehensive source of Argentine music history is the entry in the *Diccionario de la Música Española e Hispanoamericana* [Dictionary of Spanish and Hispanic American Music]. This entry covers the history until 1990. The dictionary was edited by Emilio Casares Rodicio, José López Calo, and Ismael Fernandez de la Cuesta, and with the collaborations of Irma Ruiz, Pola Suarez Urtubey, and Omar Garcia Brunelli, among other distinguished musicologists.[21]

Among the publications about Argentine music history, the book written by Rodolfo Arizaga and Pompeyo Camps, *Historia de la Música en la Argentina* [Argentine Music History],[22] provides a brief overview of Argentine music history from the Colony until the 1960s.

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[19] Both institutions were founded in the 1970s.

[20] Gerard Béhague, "Argentina: Art Music," *Grove Music Online*, accessed September 20, 2025, https://doi.org/10.1093/omo/9781561592630.013.60000200068.

[21] Omar García Brunelli, Hector Goyena, Bernardo Illari, Pablo Kohan, Marta Lambertini, Ricardo Salton, and Melanie Plesch, "Argentina," in Diccionario *de la Música Española e Hispanoamericana* [Dictionary of Spanish and Hispanic American Music], ed. Emilio Casares Rodicio, Ismael Fernandez de la Cuesta, and José López-Calo (Madrid: Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 1999), 636–663.

[22] Rodolfo Arizaga and Pompeyo Camps, *Historia de la Música en la Argentina* [Argentine Music History] (Buenos Aires: Ricordi Americana, 1990).

Juan Maria Veniard wrote *La Música Nacional Argentina*[23] [Argentine National Music], a book that presents a survey of pieces divided into three "waves." Nevertheless, the periodization of the different generations of composers has not been adopted by other historians, which could bring some confusion to the reader and researcher. This book is a significant contribution to the field because it addresses the incorporation of vernacular music into Western Art music, and it was edited by the National Institute of Musicology Carlos Vega. The National Institute of Musicology Carlos Vega and the Institute of Musicology of the Universidad Católica Argentina (UCA) have groups of research that publish periodically their research.

Maria del Carmen Muñoz wrote an article called "Apuntes para una Historia de la Música Argentina" [Notes about Argentine Music History] in which she summarizes the main exponents of the Argentine music scene between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.[24] The article is divided by types of musical works, such as piano pieces, chamber music, and diverse types of ensembles. Muñoz addresses one of the main topics associated with Argentine music history and the progress of nationalism in Argentina.[25]

The concept of nationalism, with its connotations for Argentine composers, was widely studied by several musicologists, including Malena Kuss. In the article "Nacionalismo, Identificación, y Latinoamérica," [Nationalism, Identification, and Latin America] Kuss discusses what nationalism means in the context of the piano sonatas and other pieces written by

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[23] Veniard, *La Música Nacional,* 28–53.

[24] Maria del Carmen Muñoz, "Apuntes para una Historia de la Música Argentina" [Notes about Argentine Music History], *Revista del Instituto de Musicologia Carlos Vega*, no. 7 (1986): 109–136.

[25] Muñoz, "Apuntes," 114.

Alberto Ginastera.[26] Roberto Buffo did a similar analysis with "El Rancho Abandonado" [The Abandoned Ranch], a piano solo piece by Alberto Williams. Williams was one of the first Argentine professional composers who incorporated vernacular sources of inspiration at the beginning of the twentieth century.[27] The dissertation written by Andrea Fusco Morales and the journal article which summarizes her research are also important publications about nationalism in the context of orchestral music by Argentine composers.[28]

Kuss, Buffo, and Fusco applied the theory by Carl Dahlhaus to understand the integration of nationalism in Argentina,[29] as a Latin American country with a strong European influence.[30] Kuss also discussed the theories of the musicologists Walter Nef and Jacques Handschin to explain nationalism.[31] Each text presents a different analysis of the ways folk tunes are integrated into Argentine Western Art music, and in the case of Nef and Handschin, the presumption of cultural epicenters and peripheries, that is, the relation between central Europe and all the other countries in which national Western Art music was developed. Melanie Plesch wrote with Gerardo Huseby one of the volumes of *Nueva Historia Argentina* [New Argentine History].[32]

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[26] Malena Kuss, "Nacionalismo, Identificación, y Latinoamérica." [Nationalism, Identification and Latin America] *Cuadernos de Música Iberoamericana,* no. 6 (1998): 137. https://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/CMIB/article/download/61245/4564456547913.

[27] Buffo, "La problemática," 29.

[28] Fusco, "Bases," 98.

[29] Dalhaus considers that the nationalistic art reflects the spirit of the persons from that land in each specific era.

[30] Carl Dalhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980).

[31] Quoted in Kuss, "Nacionalismo," 134–135.

[32] Gerardo Huseby and Melanie Plesch, *Nueva Historia Argentina* [New Argentine History], ed. José Emilio Burucúa, Vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2014).

This book addresses the music history including the social history of music and arts in Argentina, in relation to politics and the society. The publication *Tracing Tangueros: Argentine Tango Instrumental Music* explains the stylistic characteristics of Argentine tango, taking into consideration the different periods of tango and the performance practices of tango musicians.[33]

In the same line of work, it is important to note *Culturas Híbridas: Estrategias para Entrar y Salir de la Modernidad* [Hybrid Cultures: Strategies to Enter and Exit Modernity] by the anthropologist and cultural critic Nestor Garcia Canclini.[34] Although this book does not address directly the problem of nationalism in Western music, it discusses different dichotomies existing between popular and scholarly art, and the dialogue between European and Latin American cultures. This book is a reference for the researchers interested in understanding the crossroads between Latin American and European countries of all art forms.

Another meaningful book which brings interesting insights about the development of music in the region is *La Música en Latinoamérica* [The Music in Latin America] by Ricardo Miranda and Aurelio Tello.[35] The authors provide a comprehensive overview of music history in Latin America. Another important publication which presents a comprehensive survey of music in the region is *América Latina en su Música* [Latin America in their Music], a book which

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[33] Kacey Link, and Kristin Wendland, "What Makes It an Argentine Tango?" in Tracing Tangueros: Argentine Tango Instrumental Music, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 23–35. https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199348220.003.0002.

[34] Néstor García Canclini, *Culturas Híbridas: Estrategias Para Entrar y Salir de la Modernidad* [Hybrid Cultures: Strategies to Enter and Exit Modernity] (Mexico D.F.: Grijalbo, 1989).

[35] Ricardo Miranda and Aurelio Tello, *La Música en Latinoamérica* [The Music in Latin America], ed. Mercedes de Vega (Mexico D.F.: Direccion General de Acervo Historico Diplomatico, 2011).

presents essays written by highly respected musicologists, including the Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier (1904–1980).[36]

The analysis and study of the piano music of Argentina has similar characteristics as the research of Argentine music history; that is, it is not abundant. Despite that, recently scholars have started to conduct more systematic research that has resulted in two revealing publications. The first one is the book *La Música para Piano en Argentina (1929–1983): Mitos, Tradiciones y Modernidades* [The Piano Music in Argentina (1929–1983): Myths, Traditions and Modernities] written by the musicologist Julio Ogas.[37] This publication is a significant contribution to the field because it is a comprehensive research about Argentine piano literature. This book explains the development of the composers and pieces as sociocultural actors and factors influenced by the culture of every historical moment. Given that Montero started her career after 1983, the book does not analyze her music works; however, this publication provides an important precedent in how to analyze Argentine piano music from a musicologist point of view.

The second publication is the article about the piano concertos of Argentine composers, written by Dora de Marinis and Maria Emilia Greco. The article "Obras para Piano y Orquesta en la Argentina: Un Aporte Preliminar al Estudio del Género en Nuestro País" [Works for Piano and Orchestra in Argentina: a Preliminary Study of the Genre in Our Country] is a catalog of piano concertos and works for piano and orchestra from 1912 to 1990. [38]

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[36] Isabel Aretz, ed., *América Latina en su Música* [Latin America and its Music] (Mexico D.F.: Siglo XXI Editores, 1977).

[37] Julio Ogas, *La Música para Piano en Argentina (1929-1983): Mitos, Tradiciones y Modernidades* [The Piano Music of Argentina (1929–1983): Myths, Traditions and Modernities] (Madrid: ICCMU, 2010).

[38] María Emilia Greco and Dora de Marinis, "Obras para Piano y Orquesta en la Argentina: Un Aporte Preliminar al Estudio del Género en Nuestro País," [Music Works for Piano and Orchestra: A

The History of the Piano Concerto

In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the piano literature in Western music, the book *Eighteenth-Century Keyboard Music* provides significant insights about the keyboard music of the Classical era.[39] The essays about performance practice (written by Eva Badura-Skoda) and Mozart's keyboard concertos (written by Robert D. Levin) provide especially valuable information about the conventions of the genre during this period. The book *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music* provides a deep understanding about the piano music of the nineteenth century, with an emphasis on composers such as Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, among others.[40] In the same line of work, the book *Twentieth-Century Piano Music* by David Burge provides an overview of the twentieth century piano literature.[41] However, it does not include composers from Latin America and Spain, such as Carlos Guastavino, Manuel de Falla, and many others, whose works are without question are part of the quintessential piano literature of the century.

Furthermore, the historical evolution of the piano concerto in Western music is an important component to consider in the analysis of Montero's concerto. The book *Music for Piano and Orchestra: An Annotated Guide* by Maurice Hinson provides an annotation of each piano concerto; the guide is divided according to the instrumentation of the *tutti*—either

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Preliminary Contribution of the Study of the Piano Concerto Genre in Our Country], *Huellas*, no. 5 (2006): 17–40, https://bdigital.uncu.edu.ar/1224.

[39] Robert L. Marshall, ed., *Eighteenth-Century Keyboard Music* (New York-London: Routledge, 1994).

[40] R. Larry Todd, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music* (New York-London: Routledge, 2004).

[41] David Burge, *Twentieth-Century Piano Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1990).

orchestras or symphonic band—that accompanies the piano.[42] *The Concerto* is an anthology of essays that present the evolution of the concerto genre from the Baroque era to the second half of the twentieth century.[43] The unique feature of the publication is that each chapter introduces the reader to a specific composer to illustrate the changes among periods. Besides the most relevant piano concertos of each composer, the evolution of the genre also contains examples of concertos for other instruments, such as violin and cello. Unfortunately, this publication does not include any Latin American composers.

A History of the Concerto is a comprehensive guide to understanding the development of the genre from the Baroque era to the twentieth century.[44] This book presents a survey that not only discusses the evolution of the form but also includes considerations about the style. Additionally, the book has a section dedicated to Latin American composers, including Heitor Villa-Lobos and Alberto Ginastera.

Another important publication to understand the performance practices of the concerto and its evolution is *The Cambridge Companion to the Concerto*, edited by Simon P. Keefe.[45] This book contains three sections with different essays that provide insight about theorical aspects of the concerto genre, the evolution of the genre according to the period, and the performance practices of the concerto associated with each epoch from the late seventeenth century until the middle of twentieth century. From a morphologic point of view, the publication

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[42] Maurice Hinson, *Music for Piano and Orchestra: An Annotated Guide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

[43] Ralph Hill, ed., *The Concerto* (New York: Penguin, 1968).

[44] Michael Thomas Roeder, *A History of the Concerto* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1994).

[45] Simon P. Keefe, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Concerto* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Classical Form by William Caplin explains in detail all aspects of the micro and macro structures (from phrases to the form of complete movements) that consolidated during the Classical era, using as archetypes the music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.[46] Taking into consideration the impact these composers had on music history, it is meaningful to consider their works to compare them with the concertos by Montero.

Claudia Montero: Life and Works

There are many interviews in which Claudia Montero talks about the sources of inspiration for her music and the different projects she developed during her lifetime. Montero won four Latin Grammys on three different occasions, and she was interviewed by television channel Telecinco (2014, Spain), the podcast Mujeres sin Edad [Women without Age] (2018);[47] the television program Plaça Major by Televisió de Castelló (2018);[48] and an extensive interview by the conductor Fernanda Lastra for the specialized music magazine *Música Clásica BA*.[49] Montero was an active member of the International Alliance of Women in Music, which has its own journal. Claudia Montero appeared in four different issues of the journal, and in 2018, she was interviewed by Ruth Prieto.[50]

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[46] William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[47] Caso, Silvia de, and Dolz, Carmen, "Entrevista a Claudia Montero en Mujeres sin Edad" [Interview to Claudia Montero in Women without Age]. November 7, 2018. YouTube video, 5:45, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqyA9WSVScY.

[48] Televisió de Castelló, "Plaça Major | Claudia Montero i Ana María Archilés | 07/11/2018," November 7, 2018, YouTube video, 14:13, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p56vR1ZF49Y.

[49] Fernanda Lastra, "Claudia Montero: 'En la Vida un Proyecto de Cualquier Persona, es el Motor'" [For any person, a project is the engine of life], *Música Clásica BA*, October 25, 2020, https://musicaclasica.com.ar/claudia-montero-un-proyecto-en-la-vida-de-cualquier-persona-es-el-motor/.

[50] Ruth Prieto, "An Interview with Claudia Montero: Winner of Four Latin Grammys," *IAWM Journal: International Alliance for Women in Music* 25, no. 1 (2019), 8.

Regarding scholarly research about Claudia Montero, Fernanda Lastra included all her concertos for soloist and orchestra in her dissertation, "An Annotated Catalog of Selected Argentine Orchestral Repertoire From 2000 to 2021."[51] Montero wrote soloist concertos for harp, bandoneon, piano, violin, and guitar.[52] This dissertation provides a description of the concerto in the form of annotations. The inclusion of Montero's piano concerto is only as enunciates a broad overview of the musical work tailored for researchers interested in orchestral repertoire. This dissertation does not include any type of technical or musicological analysis.

The guitar concerto was analyzed by Laura Rausell Saborit in the journal *Notas de Paso* [Passing Tones], published by the Conservatori Superior de Música de Valencia (CSMV). This concerto is among the most celebrated works by Montero, given that the composer was awarded a Latin Grammy in 2018, in the category "Best Contemporary Classical Work."[53]

Claudia Montero's music has been recorded by many artists who have included her compositions in their albums. The concerto *En Blanco y Negro* was included in the album *Luminosa* (Sunnyside Communications, 2017) by the pianist Allison Brewster Franzetti, accompanied by the City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra. The Spanish pianist Isabel Dobarro,

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[51] Fernanda Lastra, "An Annotated Catalog of Selected Argentine Orchestral Repertoire From 2000 to 2021," DMA diss. University of Iowa, 2023, https://www.proquest.com/docview/2833016493/49C70ACA3DC740B4PQ/1?accountid=12964&sourcetype=Dissertations%20&%20Theses#.

[52] The bandoneon is a type of concertina similar to the accordion, which is quite popular in South America.

[53] Laura Rausell Saborit, "Aproximación a la Figura de Claudia Montero: Análisis del Concierto para Guitarra *Luces y Sombras*" [A Presentation of Claudia Montero: An Analysis of Montero's Guitar Concerto "Lights and Shadows"], *Revista Digital Notas de Paso*, no. 9 (May 2022):1–15, http://revistadigital2.csmvalencia.es/aproximacion-la-figura-de-claudia-montero-analisis-del-concierto-para-guitarra-luces-y-sombras/.

recently released *Kaleidoscope*[54] (Naxos, 2024), an album that includes pieces by women composers across the world, and includes Montero's "Buenos Aires, despierta y sueña." Susana Gómez Vázquez, also a Spanish pianist, included "Rondo" in her album *Sisters of the Moon* (Eudora, 2024). The Argentine pianist Cecilia Foj included "Septiembre" and "Buenos Aires, despierta y sueña" in her album *Ethereal* (Virtuoso Records, 2024). Another instrumentalist who included one of Montero's compositions is the German violinist Viktoria Kaunzner, recording Montero's Violin Concerto in her album *Saiga Antelope* (Solo Musica, 2025). The Spanish guitarist Ana Maria Archiles recorded *Evocaciones de la Lluvia* [Evocations of the Rain], a guitar solo album only with Claudia Montero's works for guitar. The Colombian clarinetist Javier Vinasco recorded the album *Tango sin Fronteras* [Tango without Frontiers] (Clarinete Mestizo, 2024), which includes the three movements of *Buenos Aires en Tres* [Buenos Aires in Three], adapted for violin, clarinet, and piano. The *Suite de los Buenos Aires* [Suite of Buenos Aires] for flute and piano was included in *Skyscraper Soup* (Naxos, 2025), the album recorded by Alena Walentin (flute) and Niklas Johansen (guitar). Also, this piece was recorded as a single in 2023 by Urdimbre Dúo [Warp Duo] integrated by Natalia Gonzalez Figueroa (piano), and Tanja Von Arx (flute).

What is more, Claudia Montero produced albums of her compositions. Among them is *Ausencias* [Absences] (2014), an album which includes string orchestra works, *Irremediablemente Buenos Aires* [Inevitably Buenos Aires] (2016), which includes works for string quartet, *Mágica y Misteriosa* [Magical and Mysterious] (2018), with the solo concertos for guitar and harp, and

[54] This album has won the Latin Grammy Award for Best Classical Music Album in 2025.

Sueños Sublimes [Sublime Dreams] (2022), an album produced by Mercedes Montero and Lucia Zicos, which include the solo concertos for bandoneon and piano.

Montero: En Blanco y Negro and Piano Music

Besides the piano concerto, Claudia Montero wrote four short piano pieces: *Sonata en Mi, "*Buenos Aires, despierta y sueña," "Junio," and "Septiembre." At the moment, there is no other available research about the piano works of Claudia Montero, including the piano concerto *En Blanco y Negro*. The lack of scholarly research about her piano music makes it important to fill the gap among the pianistic community, both in Spanish and English-speaking countries.

Outline of the Study

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the composer and the repertoire and presents the justification for the study, the purpose of the study, the limitations of the study, the review of related literature, and the outline of the study. Chapter 2 offers an overview of Argentine music history in two different periods from the Nineteenth Century (1810–1930) to the Twentieth Century to modern times. These are the most significant periods to summarize, given that most of Argentine music and piano literature expanded through occurred in these historical stages. This chapter also provides a brief overview of the development of the piano concerto. Chapter 3 is dedicated to Claudia Montero's biography, including a brief analysis of her piano works and the recordings available of her oeuvre. To supplement this section of the document, an Appendix presents Claudia Montero's albums and other recordings of her pieces. Chapter 4 is the analysis of the three movements of the piano concerto *En Blanco y Negro*, which includes a stylistic analysis and technical considerations for pianists. Chapter 5 will be a summary of the analysis, Montero's contributions through this concerto, and its significance in the piano literature. Additionally, the significance of her music works will be discussed in the historical context. The

document will conclude with future suggestions of research to expand the scholarship about Claudia Montero, and all the underlying topics intertwined in this document.

Chapter 2: Argentine Music History and the Piano Concerto History

Chapter two presents a summary of Argentine music history to understand the growth of Western art music in Argentina. The purpose of this first section is to contextualize the background of Claudia Montero's development and influences in tango and art music. Considering that the most significant growth of tango and piano literature of Argentine composers began in the nineteenth century, this section will focus on the period from the Centennial (1810–1930) to modern times. Subsequently, the chapter will present the characteristics of Argentine tango and art music, enabling an understanding of how European traditions were merged with Argentine tango and folk music. Following these sections, there is a section about the piano concerto as a genre from its European origins until modern times. Finally, there is a section that discusses the main antecedents of the genre among Argentine composers, which will provide a description of how the composers addressed the genre in the country.

Argentine Music History

The First Half of the Nineteenth Century

In 1810, the first patriotic government was established. Even though Independence occurred a few years later (1816), this historical milestone was pivotal to the notion of sovereignty and a sense of national identity, which had an impact on music. As a consequence, the music and culture of the period were influenced by themes related to the independence movement and current political events. During the nineteenth century, the salon was the environment in which the culture of the elites developed. In the prior century, the musical

activity was organized by the government and the church, whereas after the revolution, cultural activities were fostered by the new creole elite.[1]

Salon culture included gatherings with relatively informal performances, although at other times professional musicians, especially mixed-race pianists, were hired to play for hours.[2] Music was present in balls, concerts, and recitals. The most popular dances of the time included the Spanish *contradanza*, the minuet, and the waltz.[3] At this stage, there were salon dances that reflect the creole culture, among them the *cielito,* the *pericón*, and the *minué montonero*.[4] At this point, it is important to clarify that the development of folklore not only varied by region but also by type of location (i.e., rural areas in contrast to urban areas).

There is also little documentation about the music of African slaves in the country; however, it is known that they had a distinctive musical life until the nineteenth century.[5] The *candombe* was a ritual collective dance, with plenty of improvisation of dancers and musicians. Rhythm is the most important component of this music; musicians play different types of drums with diverse patterns. Although the officers of the Spanish crown tried to prohibit and eliminate *candombe*,[6] the population kept performing and enjoying it until this day. Furthermore, recent research points out that the first document in which the word tango was referenced is from 1802.[7]

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[1] Gerardo Huseby, and Melanie Plesch, *Nueva Historia Argentina* [New Argentine History], ed. José Emilio Burucúa, Vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2014), 224.

[2] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 224.

[3] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 224.

[4] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 224.

[5] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 218.

[6] Arizaga and Camps, *Historia de la Música*, 17.

[7] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 218.

It is possible that the word tango was derived from *tangó,* similar to *tambor,* a type of drum used to play *candombe*.

During the 1820s, there were efforts to create institutions to provide musical instruction, such as the Escuela de Música y Canto [School of Music and Singing] (1822), created by Juan Pedro Esnaola (1808–1878) and his uncle, José Antonio Picasarri (1769–1843). Music societies were also created, such as the Academia de Música [Academy of Music] (1822), by the Italian Virgilio Rabaglio (1786–1856), and the Sociedad Filarmónica [Philharmonic Society] (1823).[8] Although these institutions were founded by individual citizens, they were eventually supported by the government.

Similarly, the growth of musical activity was reinforced by the arrival of musicians from different European nations, including the violinists Carlo Bassini and Camilo Sivori from Italy, and the harpist Marie Belloc and the cellist Amadeo Gras, both from France.[9] During that time, concert programs alternated genres, including arias, instrumental music, and transcriptions of popular pieces.[10] The concert seasons premiered musical works by Rossini, Cimarosa, Gluck, Mozart, Haydn, and Dussek, among other composers. Picasarri conducted the premieres of a mass by Cherubini (1832) and the *Misa Solemnis* by Beethoven (1836).[11] In addition to the endeavors of the concert societies, during the 1830s and 1840s, the communities of immigrants

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[8] Guillermina Guillamón, "Gusto y Buen Gusto en la Cultura Musical Porteña (1820–1828*)"* [Taste and aesthetics of the Musical Culture of Buenos Aires]*, Prismas* 21, no. 1 (2017), 36, https://www.redalyc.org/journal/3870/387058506002/html/.

[9] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 227.

[10] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 226.

[11] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 227.

from England and Germany organized fundraising concerts. Even though these concerts were performed by amateur musicians, the concerts received enthusiastic reviews. These milestones showed a consistent enthusiasm from all segments of the population to contribute to the cultural life of the country.[12]

The programs of theaters included choreographed dances intertwined with music or theatrical representations. After 1823, professional dancers started to perform small ballets and pantomimes in Buenos Aires.[13] Military bands were important in the musical life as well. Customarily, bands would play in open-air spaces at sunset or participate in military parades. The repertoire they performed was tailored for each occasion. For the concerts at sunset, the programs included the overtures of Italian operas by Bellini and Rossini.[14]

It is important to mention that the Argentina of the first half of the nineteenth century experienced many abrupt changes that included the Revolution of 1810, Bernardino Rivadavia's presidency, the political fights between Unitarios and Federales—two opposite political factions—and in the province of Buenos Aires, the presence of Juan Manuel de Rosas as governor. The influence of those events was noteworthy. During Rivadavia's time there was a focus on to European music, whereas during Rosas' time, there was an focus on popular expressions, as Afro-Argentine music in theaters.[15] However, those openings to new expressions

[12] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 227.

[13] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 227.

[14] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 230.

[15] Rosas attended to the *tambos*, the gatherings of African slaves. Subsequently, the Teatro Coliseo programmed *candombes* during the performances by Rosas suggestion, among all the different dances and theatrical performances.

were only used for political purposes; Rosas only intended to scare the bourgeoisie and the Argentine elite, as a sign of power and domination over the population.[16]

The Second Half of the Nineteenth Century

After 1852, the year in which Rosas left power, the cultural life of Buenos Aires started to be more cosmopolitan, as is was before Rosas' times.[17] Additionally, this year marked the start of a historical period called the National Organization, which included an increasing professionalization of musicians.[18] The first generation of professional musicians included Telésforo Cabero (1831–1871), Dalmiro Costa (1836–1901), Juan Alais (1844–1914), Saturnino Berón (1847–1898), Luis José Bernasconi (1845–1885), and Francisco Hargreaves (1849–1900). According to the musicologist Juan María Veniard, this generation represents the first wave of nationalistic composers.[19] The musical works of the first "wave" of composers were focused on virtuoso pieces for solo piano, and sometimes for guitar, harp, or other instruments.[20] At this historical moment, the ways in which music was socialized remained the same. Social gatherings in salons, with performances of young women from middle and upper classes, continued unaltered. The concerts offered by bands in parks and public spaces were also a constant of the second half of the century.[21]

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[16] Arizaga and Camps, *Historia de la Música*, 34.

[17] Arizaga and Camps, *Historia de la Música* , 35.

[18] Huseby and Plesh, , *Historia Argentina*, 242.

[19] Juan María Veniard, *La Música Nacional Argentina: Influencia de la Música Criolla Tradicional en la Música Académica Argentina* [The Argentine National Music: The Influence of Creole Music into Argentine Western Art music] (Buenos Aires: Instituto Nacional de Musicología Carlos Vega, 1986), 28–38.

[20] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 242.

[21] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 240, 242.

The Generation of Eighty

In the decade of the 1880s, a series of cultural and political events produced a great transformation and led to a new generation of intellectuals that influenced almost all the spheres of public life. This generation of intellectuals and statespeople was called the Generation of Eighty. The composers who belonged to this generation are Arturo Berutti (1858–1938), Alberto Williams (1862–1952), and Julián Aguirre (1868–1924).[22] According to the periodization of the musicologist Juan María Veniard, this generation of composers corresponds to the second nationalistic "wave."[23]

The second nationalistic "wave" is characterized by musicians who traveled to Europe in order to continue their education.[24] This generation is responsible—in different aspects—for the development of the musical life of the country.[25] Arturo Berutti composed musical works for chamber music, solo repertoire, and orchestral pieces; nonetheless, his operas are the most celebrated works of his oeuvre. However, there is no evidence that he wrote solo piano pieces.

Alberto Williams had a significant impact on the history of Argentine music. His ancestors from his father's side were from England, whereas those from his mother's side were creole.[26] In fact, his grandfather was Amancio Alcorta (1805–1862), a politician, scholar, and

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[22] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 244.

[23] Veniard, *La Música*, 39–65.

[24] Berutti studied in the Leipzig Conservatory; Williams studied in the Paris Conservatory; and Aguirre studied at the Madrid Conservatory. In the case of Berutti and Williams, they received a scholarship from the national government called *Premio Europa* [Europe Price].

[25] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 244.

[26] Arizaga and Camps, *Historia de la Música*, 54.

composer.[27] During his time in France, his teachers were August Durand and César Franck, one of Williams' greatest influences.[28] After his time in France, Williams dedicated his endeavors to professionalizing music in Argentina.[29] For that, Williams founded a conservatory which he directed between 1893 and 1941.

Regarding Williams' activity as a composer, he wrote more than one hundred musical works in almost all genres, except opera.[30] His beginnings as a composer reflect the influence of his teachers, given that are written in Romantic or Post-Romantic style. Upon his return to Argentina, Williams visited the countryside, where he became acquainted with folk music that he later integrated into his music.[31] Although his research did not follow the systematic approach of ethnomusicology, Williams set a significant precedent that had repercussions for future generations of composers. "El Rancho Abandonado" (the fourth movement of the piano suite *En la sierra* Op. 32) [In the Mountain Range Op. 32], and the milongas of *Aires de La Pampa* [Airs of The Pampa], Op. 63 and 64 are his most iconic pieces for piano. Regarding the repertoire for orchestra, the Symphony No. 2 *La Bruja de las Montañas* [The Witch from the Mountains] set a shift in Williams' style, which made him closer to Impressionism. Among the solo piano works from this Impressionistic stage are *Poemas para Piano* [Poems for Piano], a collection that

[27] Arizaga and Camps, *Historia de la Música*, 32.

[28] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 245.

[29] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 245.

[30] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 245.

[31] Roberto Buffo, "La problemática del nacionalismo musical argentino" [The Issue of Argentine Musical Nationalism], *Revista del Instituto de Investigación Musicológica Carlos Vega* 31, no. 31 (2017):34, https://repositorio.uca.edu.ar/handle/123456789/1309.

includes *Poema de la Playa* Op. 81 [Poem of the Beach Op. 81], *Poema de la Noche* Op. 84 [Poem of the Night], and *Poema Fueguino* Op. 86, among others.

Julián Aguirre also made great contributions to the musical life of Argentina. However, his personality led him to cultivate more introspective genres and develop a more personal musical career. For example, instead of attending French or German institutions, Aguirre studied in Spain during his youth,[32] which consolidated his affinity to Spanish Romanticism. Although his oeuvre contains pieces for orchestra and chamber musical works, the most significant pieces are the solo piano pieces or vocal music with piano accompaniment.[33] Among his most popular works for piano are several sets of short pieces, such as *Aires Criollos* [Creole Airs]; the three collections of *Aires nacionales argentinos* [National Argentine Airs], five *Tristes,* and other short pieces with direct connection to folkloric dances. His works for voice and piano include a collection called *Canciones Argentinas* [Argentine Songs], and a collection of songs for children with titles such as "Don gato" [Mr. Cat] and "Era un ratoncito" [It Was a Little Mouse].

In regard to the popular music of the period, a new genre called *sainete criollo* became quite popular. The *sainete criollo* derived from the Spanish *zarzuela*, a genre that alternated acted parts with songs or musical interludes.[34] The unique feature of this genre is that all the characters were based on current "personas" from everyday life, including politicians, immigrants, and countryside people, among others. The *sainete* implied the integration of all social actors in the stories presented on stage. The peak of its popularity was between 1890 and

[32] Arizaga and Camps, *Historia de la Música*, 55.

[33] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 247.

[34] Arizaga and Camps, *Historia de la Música*, 43.

1910,[35] coinciding with the climax of the immigration campaign launched by the national government during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Besides the transformation of institutions, from the 1880s Argentina experienced an immense social change due to the immigration waves. At the time, the plan of the government was to populate all the deserts of Argentine land. Although a great deal of immigrants lived in the countryside, many others remained in the city. This contrast and blend between immigration and the already diverse Argentine society created a sensation of apocalypse among the elites of the country. As a consequence, intellectuals and artists of the time dedicated their efforts to creating a national identity through their literary works, musical pieces, paintings, and other types of artistic works. Amid this quest towards national identity, the figure of the *gaucho*—a South American horseman or cowhand—became the cultural symbol of nationalism with which the elites wanted the entire population to identify.[36] The "rise" of the *gaucho* as a symbolic figure meant a shift of mentality, given that until then the *gaucho* was considered a barbaric character in society, at least until the end of the nineteenth century.

According to tango historians, this period is also the moment in which the Guardia Vieja (1880–1925) [Old Guard] started. During this period, tango was a purely instrumental style and was performed among European immigrants and Afro-Argentine communities of the outskirts of the city.[37] The instruments associated with tango in its beginnings were the flute, guitar, and violin. The rhythmic component of the music was one of the most important characteristics

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[35] Arizaga and Camps, *Historia de la Música*, 43.

[36] Huseby and Plesh, *Historia Argentina*, 243.

[37] Secretaría de Cultura, "El origen negro del tango" [The Afro-Argentine Origin of Tango], accessed January 20, 2026. https://www.cultura.gob.ar/el-origen-negro-del-tango_6929/.

because tango, in its origins, was fundamentally a dance.[38] Among the most representative composers of the Guardia Vieja are the pianists and conductors Roberto Firpo (1884–1969), Juan Carlos Cobián (1896–1953), Eloísa D'Herbil de Silva (1842–1944), Eduardo Arolas (1892–1924), who was a bandoneon player.[39]

The last years of the nineteenth century solidified and accelerated what was emerging during the entire century. The intense professionalization of the musicians and composers made the cultural life more abundant, comparable to the main cities of Europe or the US. The proliferation of concert series, the professionalization of local musicians, and the foundation of institutions as conservatories or music schools made music more evolved and accessible. Nevertheless, musical instruction was provided by private institutions. Between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, many private conservatories were established. Many of them, for instance the Conservatorio Fracassi (founded in 1904), Conservatorio Williams (founded in 1893), and Conservatorio Beethoven (founded in 1900), continue providing music lessons, programming concerts, and contributing to the musical life of Buenos Aires.

Other significant composers of this period were Carlos López Buchardo (1881–1948) and Ernesto Drangosch (1882–1925). In the case of López Buchardo, the songs for voice and piano and the solo piano repertoire are among his most well-known works.[40] Regarding Ernesto Drangosch, this composer is a special case among all the composers of this period. Drangosch

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[38] Flavio Romanelli, "Los distintos periodos del tango y su historia" [The different tango periods and its history], July 17, 2021, YouTube video, 8:50, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oINAdyEJqK0.

[39] Laura Bedoya, "Las compositoras olvidadas" [The Forgotten Composers], accessed April 12, 2026, https://decimebandoneon.wordpress.com/2023/03/07/las-olvidadas/.

[40] Veniard, *La Música ,* 68–69.

did not follow the nationalistic trends that characterized other composers of the time.[41] In fact, Drangosch incorporated tango as a source of inspiration in some of his musical works. Although he was not the only composer experimenting with tango, his works are central to explain the incorporation of tango in Argentine piano literature. Drangosch was an accomplished pianist and most of his output was for piano. Among his most interesting piano works are *Tres Impresiones*, Op. 27 [Three Impressions], and the tango "El Perseguido" [The Pursued].

The Argentine music history of the late nineteenth century presented musicians trying to imitate the shift towards a (more) nationalistic discourse already palpable among European composers of the mid-Romantic period. For instance, the Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg (1843–1907) infused his music with nationalistic themes and folk music in ways that had no precedent in previous centuries.[42] Nonetheless, nationalism in Argentina developed later than in Europe;[43] Therefore, the influence of mid and late Romantic influences merged with Impressionistic compositional approaches. Alberto Williams was the archetype of this phenomenon.

Furthermore, the incorporation of folk music as a source of inspiration was deeply influenced by the Argentine establishment's urgency to establish a national identity. This historical fact contrasts with the situation in many European nations of the time, which were immersed in wars or political upheaval. Therefore, nationalism in Argentine music contrasts with

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[41] Veniard, *La Música ,* 69–70.

[42] The example of nationalism embodied by Grieg was chosen in order to avoid associations with later composers whose nationalist aesthetics became entangled with twentieth-century political ideologies and supremacist thinking.

[43] Andrea Gabriela Fusco Morales, "Bases del nacionalismo musical en la Argentina," [Foundations of the Musical Nationalism in Argentina], *Antec: Revista Peruana De Investigación Musical* 7, no. 2 (December 2023):102 , https://doi.org/10.62230/antec.v7i2.200.

that of European composers for two reasons: first, Argentina is a Latin American country; and second, the threat to national identity was driven by a migration policy promoted by a sovereign government. Therefore, the incorporation of folk tunes became imperative rather than a possibility.

Twentieth Century to Modern Times

The inauguration of Teatro Colón (1908) was great incentive for the musical life of the country.[44] Although the theatre stood out as an opera house, it also presented ballets and concert music with local and international artists. Among the artists that performed in Teatro Colón in its beginnings were the conductors Pietro Mascagni and Arturo Toscanini, and the singers Enrico Caruso and Maria Callas. Additionally, the national conservatory of music and dramatic arts (later known as Conservatorio Nacional Lopez Buchardo),[45] was established in 1924, and currently this institution is the music department of the Universidad Nacional de las Artes [National University of Arts] (UNA).

The popular music of the beginning of the twentieth century was enormously influenced by the presence of Carlos Gardel (1890–1935). Gardel was a tango singer who was born in Toulouse (France). When he was two years old, he emigrated with his family to Argentina. Gardel sang several styles, including folk music and fox-trot. Nevertheless, he was especially known for his tango songs. His partnership with the lyricist Alfredo Le Pera was legendary; together they composed songs like "Por una Cabeza" [For a Head], "Volver" [To Come Back],

[44] Although several theaters were established in other important cities (for instance Rosario, Córdoba, or Mendoza), this also reinforced the centralization of the musical life of Argentina.

[45] Carlos Lopez Buchardo was the founder and first director of the conservatory. After his death in 1948, the institution was named in his honor.

and “El Día que me Quieras” [The Day You Love Me], among other tango songs that became very famous worldwide.

After this moment, tango started to be more accepted, followed the period called Guardia Nueva (1925–1940) [New Guard], in which tango started to be more musically elaborate. Tango performers and composers had access to musical institutions, and they translated their education into music-making. Tango started to have a more refined voice leading, complex textures, and a different instrumentation. The main representative of this tango period is composer Julio de Caro (1899–1980). Despite the fact that this new period brought innovation and novelty, the composers of the Old Guard continued composing using more traditional parameters. At this point the small ensemble became in a sextet.

The evolution of tango was deeply connected with the film industry, something which helped to immortalize the interpretations of singers and musicians of the time. In fact, the first Argentine movie which had sound was the film *Tango* (1933). In this film, the celebrated singer, actress, and composer Tita Merello (1904–2002) made one of her most important appearances in films.[46]

The development of art music in Argentina (and the rest of the world) there was deeply influenced by a myriad of international events that changed the course of history. During (and after) the First World War (1914–1918), French musicians were deeply concerned about the great influence of Germanic culture and aesthetic trends in music. The shadow of Beethoven and later Schoenberg generated a quest for originality beyond the sonata form or the 12-tone system. Along those lines, the Grupo Renovación began its activity.

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[46] Secretaría de Cultura, “*Tango*, la Primera Película Sonora Argentina, a 87 años de su estreno,” [Tango, the first Argentine sound film, after 87 years of its premiere], accessed January 20, 2026.

The Grupo Renovación

In the context of all these events, the coming generation of composers not only belonged to less privileged social classes, but also some of them were first generation Argentines whose parents were immigrants. All these factors explain why the Grupo Renovación did not follow the same aesthetic trends that the previous generations of composers, or at least the aesthetic choices.

The Grupo Renovación was created in September 1929, and it remained active until 1938. The founder members were Juan Carlos Paz (1897–1972), Jacobo Ficher (1896–1978), Juan José Castro (1895–1968), Gilardo Gilardi (1889–1963), and José María Castro (1892–1964).[47] At the time of the foundation of the group, the five composers wrote a manifesto in which they set several objectives. First, the group was a way in which composers would help each other to grow artistically; second, the group would have its concert season featuring works by its members; third, the group would make possible the publication of the composer's pieces; and finally, the group would collaborate actively in the artistic Argentine scene in all possible ways.[48]

One of the main characteristics of the group was the mixed musical identity of all of its members. The composers had the freedom to identify either with Serialism, Neoclassicism, or a Nationalistic aesthetic. The group had regular meetings, especially during fall and spring,[49] and all the members had an intense musical activity as performers and/or conductors, except for Juan Carlos Paz, who was also a writer and music critic.[50]

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[47] Scarabino, *Grupo Renovación*, 79.

[48] Scarabino, *Grupo Renovación*, 69.

[49] Scarabino, *Grupo Renovación*, 72.

[50] Arizaga and Camps, *Historia de la Música*, 72.

According to Guillermo Scarabino, the Grupo Renovación was created in a similar way to the French *Société Musicale Indépendante* (1909), an entity founded by the dissident members of the *Société Nationale De Musique* (1871).[51] In 1915, Argentine composers founded the *Sociedad Nacional de Música* [National Society of Music]. This society meant to provide opportunities for professional development to the composers who studied in Europe and once they returned to Argentina, they did not have the chance to keep growing as musicians.[52] Given that Alberto Williams was the honorary president, it is implied that the musical aesthetic fostered by this society was the "type" of nationalism that the Grupo Renovación intended to avoid.[53]

It is important to consider that due to the Grupo Renovación activity,[54] the music of Bartók and Kodály began to be known and studied in Argentina. This means that for these composers, the adoption of folk music was emulating modern folklorists. As a result, the music needed to recreate the vernacular style—either folklore or tango—rather than merely "paraphrase" it.

Another influential figure for the members of the group was Igor Stravinsky. In the same way that occurred with Bartók, Stravinsky's pieces were included in the concert programs and

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[51] In 1915, the *Sociedad Nacional de Música* [National Society of Music] was founded by a group of Nationalistic composers from the Eighty, who (except in one case) studied in Europe. Alberto Williams was the honorary president.

[52] Scarabino, *Grupo Renovación*, 24–25.

[53] Floro Ugarte (1884–1975) was an Argentine composer of the traditional nationalistic trend, stated that "composers should follow the Spanish composers who adopted the French modern school." Scarabino, *El Grupo Renovación*, 33.

[54] The Grupo Renovación developed concert seasons in which they premiered their own compositions. Once the Grupo Renovación became the Argentine branch of the International Society of Contemporary Music (ISCM), it started a quite fruitful exchange with composers from different parts of the world, including the United States, Poland, Yugoslavia, among others. Not only did composers become acquainted with the latest international trends, but they premiered their musical works abroad.

analyzed by the composers. Although not all the composers adopted Stravinsky's Neoclassicism, such an eclectic composer most likely influenced these composers at least in one of his three periods. Additionally, even though composers tended to identify with certain styles or techniques, experimentation was an important feature during the twentieth century. Therefore, at some point, the composers of the Grupo Renovación went through a "universal" stage of creation before they solidified their personal style.

The background of the members of the Grupo Renovación is different. Initially, Juan José and José María Castro studied with Eduardo Fornarini,[55] an Italian composer who lived in Argentina until the 1920s. During the 1920s, Juan Jose Castro studied at La Schola Cantorum with Vincent D'Indy. Castro won the Premio Europa [Europe Prize], though he was not paid the scholarship amount, which forced Castro to make his living playing tango in restaurants. As a result, the knowledge of the genre was firsthand, and the incorporation of tango in his pieces went far beyond the melodic gesture.[56] His international success led him to appointments as conductor in Cuba, Australia, and the USA, among other countries. His most representative works are the suite *Tangos* (1941) for piano, *Intrata y Danza Rústica* (1946) [Intrata and Rustic Dance] for violin and piano, and *Corales Criollos No. 3* (1953), an orchestral work in the form of a theme and variations.

José María Castro was the youngest son of the Castro family. Unlike Juan José, José María received his education only in Argentina. Another unique trait is that his style was always Neoclassical, and it did not undergo great changes during his career. José María Castro

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[55] Scarabino, *Grupo Renovación*, 36.

[56] Omar García Brunelli, "El Tango en la Obra de Juan José Castro" [The Tango in the Oeuvre of Juan José Castro], *Revista del Instituto de Investigación Musicológica Carlos Vega*, no. 25 (2011): 83–113.

composed orchestral pieces, chamber music (string quartets and duets with piano), and a *Concerto Grosso* for piano and orchestra.

Jacobo Ficher was an émigré from Odessa, Russia. He attended the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where he studied with Nikolai Tcherepnin and Nikolai Sokolov, disciples of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov.[57] Once he was in Argentina, the premiere of one of his pieces by an important local orchestra introduced him to the Argentine musical scene. In his output is possible to observe the influence of many aspects of his identity including his Slavic and Jewish origins. Eventually, he also incorporated folk music as a source of inspiration, though more like an homage to Argentina, rather than an actual artistic quest.[58] His body of work is quite abundant because he composed in almost all genres. His most representative works are *Kaddish* Op. 112, a cantata; *Variaciones y Fuga sobre un* Tema *de Mozart* Op. 95 [Variations and Fugue on a Mozart's Theme], for orchestra; and many musical works for solo piano, two pianos, and piano and orchestra.

Gilardo Gilardi was a self-taught composer, though during his beginnings, he studied with his father (Andrés Gilardi) and Pablo Berutti. Besides his activity as a composer, he was a pianist, conductor, and pedagogue. His music blends folk and indigenous music with Neoclassicism.[59] His most representative works are the opera *La Leyenda del Urutaú* [The Legend of Urutaú] (1932), and *Gaucho con Botas Nuevas* [Countryman with New Boots](1936), an orchestral piece.

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[57] Scarabino, *Grupo Renovación*, 15.

[58] Arizaga and Camps, *Historia de la Música*, 69.

[59] EPDLP, "Gilardo Gilardi," https://www.epdlp.com/compclasico.php?id=3309.

Juan Carlos Paz is the most enigmatic member of the group. Paz studied in Buenos Aires, and at La Schola Cantorum. He was the only composer of this generation who decided to compose using the 12-tone system.[60] His artistic quest left him isolated from the Argentine music scene, in which most composers developed compositional techniques related to tonality. In addition to this "artistic solitude," Paz was also a music critic and intellectual. During his lifetime, he wrote articles and essays that were controversial and isolated him even more.[61] His most representative musical works are the orchestral pieces: *Rítmica Ostinata* (1952), *Passacaglia* (1953), and *Transformaciones Canónicas* [Canonic Transformations] (1956).[62]

The Grupo Renovación had more members besides the founding members. Among them, Luis Gianneo, Honorio Siccardi, Alfredo Pinto, Julio Perceval, and Washington Castro.[63] These composers joined after 1931 for different periods and historical moments. All of them carried on musical activities that allowed them to make significant contributions. The fact that many of them lived in other provinces and carried on an intense activity as performers or pedagogues made it difficult to continue with the group's activities. Additionally, the political problems due to the military coup of 1943 most likely had a decisive influence on the activity of the Grupo Renovación, which stopped ceased in 1944.

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[60] Arizaga and Camps, *Historia de la Música*, 72.

[61] Scarabino, *Grupo Renovación*, 88–100.

[62] Arizaga and Camps, *Historia de la Música,* 73.

[63] Scarabino, *Grupo Renovación*, 88.

Additional Key Figures of the Mid Twentieth Century

Besides the increasing musical activity and the composers, it is also important to mention the presence of the Spanish composer Manuel de Falla (1876–1946) and the Swiss conductor Ernest Ansermet (1883–1969). Manuel de Falla established himself in Argentina in 1939, where he initially lived in Buenos Aires and later in several cities of Córdoba, particularly in Alta Gracia, where he resided until his death in 1946. Falla became a close friend of Juan José Castro.[64] Castro premiered *Atlántida* (a scenic cantata) which was the last work Falla wrote before this death.[65] Ernest Ansermet was also another important actor in the Argentine music scene. Ansermet came to Argentina on several occasions to conduct several orchestras, including the orchestra of the Asociación del Profesorado Orquestal.[66] Although his presence was helpful to improve the level of professional musicians, his articles about Argentine music criticized the composers who attempted to develop a nationalistic style, especially those who did not belong to the Grupo Renovación.

Although the Argentine music scene was an environment predominantly masculine, two Argentine women composers developed their careers in the mid-twentieth century: Celia Torrá (1884–1962) and Lita Spena (1904–1989). Both composers were among the first women composers who developed professional careers in Argentina. [67] Celia Torrá was a violinist,

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[64] Secretaría de Cultura,"Manuel de Falla, un gaditano en Argentina," [Manuel de Falla, a Spanish in Argentina], accessed January 20, 2025, https://www.cultura.gob.ar/manuel-de-falla-un-gaditano-en-argentina-8555/.

[65] Arizaga and Camps, *Historia de la música*, 68.

[66] Arizaga and Camps, *Historia de la música*, 66.

[67] Florencia Mariel Zuloaga, "Rediscovering Argentine Repertoire Written in the 1930s: A Performative Study of Concert Piano Works by Lita Spena and Celia Torrá." DMA diss., The University of Nebraska, 2022, https://www.proquest.com/docview/2754747938?accountid=12964&fromopenview=true&parentSessionId=fq1%2FfJpX0FEAqzxr5XgD6xug4Tb6QqSvuJcqHGaTieE%3D&parentSessionI

conductor, and composer. In 1909, she was awarded the Premio Europa [Europe Prize], which allowed her to continue her studies in the Royal Conservatoire of Brussels. Upon her return to Argentina, in 1921 she became the first female conductor of the orchestra of Teatro Colón. Her most important work is the *Piano Sonata* (1933), dedicated to the Argentine composer Athos Palma.[68]

Lita Spena was a pianist, composer, choral conductor, and pedagogue. In her capacity as pianist, she integrated the Trio Argentina [Argentine Trio] with Celia Torrá (violin) and Blanca Cattoi (cello). Alongside her career as a performer, Spena conducted the Primer Coro Infantil Argentino [First Argentine Choir of Argentina] and presented lectures about music pedagogy for children. Her musical output includes the *Piano Sonata* (1937), a set of *Piano Preludes* (1939), and many pieces for choir.[69]

The following tandem of composers is the pillar of modern Argentine music history due to the relevance of their work locally and overseas. Additionally, many of them set a precedent for the incorporation of tango into Argentine music. Among the modern composers, Alberto Ginastera (1916–1983) was a composer who not only had international recognition, but also had his music widely performed across the world. His musical education started in the Conservatorio Williams, and later, he continued his studies at the Conservatorio Nacional. In 1937, Juan José Castro premiered Ginastera's *Panambí* suite at Teatro Colón. This performance established Ginastera's reputation as a composer while he was still a student in the Conservatorio Nacional.

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d=mcZ%2FD5odgyqczYmHPwlDrPFjefIcrzbsLPwmbspcCt0%3D&pq-origsite=gscholar&sourcetype=Dissertations%20&%20Theses, 5.

[68] Zuloaga, "Rediscovering Argentine Repertoire," 12.

[69] Zuloaga, "Rediscovering Argentine Repertoire," 39, 40.

In 1940, *Panambí* premiered overseas in the context of the performances of the American Ballet Caravan. After the successful premiere, Lincoln Kirstein—the director of the ballet company—commissioned another orchestral work, which turned out to be the ballet *Estancia* (1941). Although the piece was not premiered during the ballet performances, eventually Ginastera altered the music to be performed as a suite. The premiere of the work in this format occurred in 1943 with a warm reception.[70] The following works followed this nationalistic line, including *Malambo* (1940), *Cinco Canciones Populares Argentinas* [Five Popular Argentine Songs](1943), and *Obertura para el Fausto Criollo* [Overture for the Creole Faust](1943).

Like Castro, Ginastera had to exile himself from Argentina due to political reasons. In 1945, Ginastera used his Guggenheim scholarship to travel to the US. In 1947, he came back to Argentina, where he worked in several academic institutions. In 1958, he resigned his positions to create the music department of the Universidad Católica Argentina (UCA) [Catholic University of Argentina]. He served as dean between 1958 and 1963. Years later, he became the founder and of the Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales (CLAEM) at the Instituto Torcuato di Tella in Buenos Aires. This institution was very important in the *avant-garde* scene of the period. This institution was an important catalyst for artists from many disciplines, whose influences are traceable to modern times.

In the meantime, Ginastera's style continued evolving, which is why his oeuvre is divided into three periods. The first period, in which the use of nationalistic elements was clear and intentional, was called "objective nationalism" (1937–47). The suites *Panambí* and *Estancia*

[70] Deborah Schwartz-Kates, "Alberto Ginastera," *Grove Music Online*, accessed January 20, 2025, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000011159.

correspond to this period. The second period was called "subjective nationalism" (1947–57).[71] This period presents pieces in which the musical material is more abstract, although the references to Argentine folk music are still present in his pieces. The musical works representative of this period are the String Quartet No. 1 Op. 20 (1948), and *Pampeana n.° 2*: *Rapsody for Cello and Piano* Op. 21 (1950).[72] The third period is called "neo-expressionism" (1958–83). In this case, Ginastera shifted to an *avant-garde* aesthetic, which led him to experiment with dodecaphonism and serialism. Among the pieces written in this period are Quintet Op. 29 (1963), and the *Cantata Bomarzo* Op. 32.[73] Based on the characteristics of Ginastera's music, he seems to be an heir to both the first nationalistic composers of the twentieth century and the Grupo Renovación as well.

Carlos Guastavino (1912–2000) was born in the city of Santa Fé (Santa Fé, Argentina). His musical education started in his hometown, although during his youth he studied in Buenos Aires. Instead of attending the Conservatorio Nacional, he took lessons with Athos Palma (composition) and Rafael González (piano). In the 1940s, Guastavino received a grant from the British Council that allowed him to stay for two years in the UK. During that time, he performed his compositions in Great Britain and Ireland.

Additionally, many other performers from Argentina and overseas started to play Guastavino pieces, which gave him even more recognition. In 1956, he travelled to different destinations in Latin America, China, and Russia (the former Soviet Union). Guastavino taught

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[71] Deborah Schwartz-Kates, *Alberto Ginastera: A Research and Information Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 23.

[72] In this period Ginastera composed soundtracks for Argentine films, such as *Caballito Criollo* and *Enigma de Mujer*.

[73] Schwartz-Kates, *Alberto Ginastera,* 40–94.

at the Conservatorio Nacional and Conservatorio Municipal, though he never felt completely satisfied with those posts.[74] In 1975, he stopped composing due to the death of his mother and other conflicts with his colleagues. In 1987, he started to compose again, thanks to the encouragement of the choral conductor Carlos Vilo.

In terms of style, somehow Guastavino continued the legacy of Julián Aguirre. Guastavino blended the folkloric music of his homeland with romantic gestures. The main difference between him and the first nationalistic waves is that Guastavino was acquainted firsthand with folk music, and the incorporation into his repertoire occurs organically. His musical works developed mostly in short solo piano pieces and vocal music with piano accompaniment. Among the works for piano, the collections *Mis Amigos* [My Friends] (1956) and *La Siesta* (1942) are some of his most well-known works. In regard his vocal pieces, Guastavino wrote more than 60 songs, which were performed for popular and classical performers. The songs "Se Equivocó la Paloma" or "La Rosa y el Sauce" are among his most performed songs. Additionally, Guastavino composed orchestral works, such as the ballet *Fué Una Vez*, or the piano concerto (*Romance de Santa Fé*).

During the 1940s until the first half of the 1950s, La Era Dorada del Tango [The Gilded Age of Tango] took place. During this time, tango became so popular that every cafe featured orchestra pit for its tango orchestra. The orchestras had their own composer and an arranger who actively helped tango groups to prepare the most compelling performances. At this point, it became increasingly evident that composers or groups who were more traditional performed rhythmic music for dancers, whereas the tango composers with more sophisticated compositions

[74]Jonathan Kulp, "Carlos Guastavino," *Grove Music Online*, accessed January 20, 2025, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000045219.

meant to deliver performances for listening. Among the most traditional composers of the period were Carlos di Sarli (1903–1960), Juan D'Arienzo (1900–1976), and Alfredo De Angelis (1912–1992); and among the most vanguardist composers of the period were Anibal Troilo (1914–1975) and Osvaldo Pugliese (1905–1995).

Second Half of the Twentieth Century

According to the musicologist Juan María Veniard, after the 1950s the oeuvre of Argentine composers diminished due to the political and social changes in Argentina and the rest of the world.[75] Furthermore, the second half of the twentieth century had a difficult turn around for Argentina history. The alternation of democratic governments with military coups generated a social and economic instability that restricted artistic activity due to the lack of economic stability and the threat to freedom of speech.

Despite the sociopolitical turmoil, the Asociación de Jóvenes Compositores de la Argentina [Association of Argentine Young Composers] was created in 1957. Overall, this association was quite free in terms of style or aesthetic affiliation. The members of this group were Mario García Acevedo (1926–2025), Álcides Lanza (1929–1924), Jorge Kumok (1931), Eduardo Alemann (1922–2005), Jorge Oscar Pickenhayn (1921–2002), Mario Davidovsky (b. 1935), Virtú Maragno (1928–2004), and Alejandro Barletta (1925–2008), among others.[76]

Although during the 1950s the popularity of tango declined, during the second half of that decade, many composers started another important tango period called La Vanguardia [The Avant-Garde]. One of the main characteristics of this period is that a tango orchestra became a

[75] Veniard, *La Música Nacional*, 116.

[76] Arizaga and Camps, *Historia de la Música,* 93.

quintet or a sextet. Until then, tango orchestras had four bandoneons, four violins, one viola, one cello, and one double bass. Among the most representative musicians of this period are Carlos Salgán (1916–2006), Eduardo Rovira (1925–1980), and Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992). Although there were always *milongas* (social gatherings to dance tango), the composers of this period focused on composing tangos with much more sophisticated compositional approaches. Then, tango became a style to be listened to or danced by tango professional dancers.

During the 1960s, popular music also developed widely in Argentina because of the influence of The Beatles and other international artists. In the same fashion as the US, music started to be tailored specifically to youngsters. The music for younger generations acquired more relevance in the music industry and contemporary culture. After the release of The Beatles' first album, many groups started to imitate them and play their songs. The first Argentine rock song was "La Balsa" by the group Los Gatos, released in 1967.[77] Later, other groups such as Manal, Almendra, Aquelarre, Pescado Rabioso, and Pappo's Blues started to perform during the 1970s.[78] In all cases, the songs of these groups contain lyrics full of metaphors and an exploration of timbre, which varies according to the specific influences of each group.

Astor Piazzolla was a controversial figure in the Argentine music scene. He was born in Mar del Plata (Buenos Aires), but during his infancy he also lived in New York. His musical beginnings were there, where he took lessons in piano and bandoneon. During those years, Piazzolla met Carlos Gardel, and occasionally he performed with his group.[79] In 1937, he came

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[77] No es FM, "'La Balsa' de Los Gatos: 58 años surcando las aguas del rock argentino," accessed January 21, 2026, https://noesfm.com/la-balsa-de-los-gatos-58-anos-surcando-las-aguas-del-rock-argentino/.

[78] Emiliano Daniel Orcajo, "Los jóvenes y los orígenes del rock nacional" [The Youngsters and the Birth of Argentine Rock], *XVII Jornadas Interescuelas* (2019): 8–14, https://cdsa.aacademica.org/000-040/99.pdf.

back to Buenos Aires and started to arrange tangos for Anibal Troilo's orchestra. Because of the pianist Arthur Rubinstein, Piazzolla met Ginastera in 1940. After this encounter, Piazzolla took lessons in counterpoint, harmony, orchestration, and composition with Ginastera until 1946.[80] In 1954, Piazzolla won a scholarship to study with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, who encouraged him to compose tangos.

Besides his activity as a composer, Piazzolla performed frequently with his groups. The first one was the Octeto Buenos Aires [Buenos Aires Octet], created in 1957, and the second one was the Quinteto Tango Nuevo [New Tango Quintet], created in 1960 and a Sextet, created in the late 1980s. Piazzolla was very open to experimentation and innovation; his scholarly background and his contact with jazz and other styles narrowed the gap between traditional tango musicians and the classical music world. Piazzolla declared himself much more akin to rock musicians, who were doing "a new music of Buenos Aires."[81] After Piazzolla received international recognition, and his pieces started to be performed by Gidon Kremer, Mstislav Rostropóvich, and the Kronos Quartet, his music was also accepted in Argentina. Additionally, Piazzolla collaborated with the saxophonist Gerry Mulligan, with whom recorded the album *Summit* in 1974.

By suggestion of Bruno Bragato (1915–2017), a cellist who performed with Piazzolla in many of his groups, Bragato started to arrange Piazzolla's music so it could be performed as

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[79] Cliff Eisen and Derek B. Scott, "Astor Piazzolla," *Grove Music Online,* accessed December 1, 2025, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000045219.

[80] Guillermo Scarabino, "Piazzolla and Ginastera: Two Contrasting Sides of Argentine Music," accessed December 10, 2025, https://iclassical-academy.com/piazzolla-ginastera-argentine-music/.

[81] Rarezas SNM, "Piazzolla hablando de Spinetta y Charly García (1976)," March 12, 2021, YouTube video, 1:54, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syjJpnMCDPY.

chamber music and by string orchestras.[82] Bragato's idea was founded on the fact that the bandoneon was not a common instrument in Europe (at least in that period). Piazzolla celebrated the idea and after that his music began to be performed even more often. Unfortunately, it is unknown which works were arranged by Bragato; however, he was a key figure in the career of Astor Piazzolla. The most important works of Piazzolla are *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* [Four Seasons of Buenos Aires] (1964), a suite for bandoneon and string orchestra; *María de Buenos Aires* (1968), a little opera; and many tangos, including "Libertango" and "Adiós Nonino."

The appearance of Piazzolla in music changed the perception of tango in the entire society, most especially among classical musicians. Among the composers of the following generations, Gerardo Gandini (1936–2013) and Saúl Cosentino (1935) are musicians deeply influenced by the interaction that they had with the composer, in their capacity as performers or students. Gandini was a quite singular figure in Argentine music. He was a conductor, pianist, and composer who alternately collaborated with classical musicians and popular musicians of tango and rock. In certain ways, he seemed to embody what Piazzolla intended as composer and performer. Gandini studied composition with Alberto Ginastera and the Italian composer Goffredo Petrassi.[83] He was awarded with the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Molière Award conferred by the French government, and the Leone d'Oro of the Venice International Film

[82] Fundación el Sonido y el Tiempo, "José Bragato: Partituras de su Vida" [José Bragato: Music Scores of his Life] August 11, 2021, YouTube video, 28:17, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubBU-EgeHtQ.

[83] Babel Scores, "Gerardo Gandini," accessed December 1, 2025, https://www.babelscores.com/es/GerardoGandini.

Festival, among other awards.[84] During the 1960s, Gandini became involved with the Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales (CLEAM) [Latin American Center of Music Studies]. Gandini taught at the Instituto Di Tella (Buenos Aires), Juilliard School of Music (New York), Universidad Católica Argentina, Conservatorio Gilardo Gilardi of (La Plata, Argentina), and Universidad Nacional de La Plata (La Plata, Argentina). As pianist, he played in the last group that Piazzolla had during the 1980s, the Sexteto; collaborated with the Argentine rock musician Fito Paez; and played a set of special renditions of tangos called *Postangos*. His international collaborations included recordings with the Louisville Orchestra.

Gandini was the musical director of Orquesta Filarmónica de Buenos Aires [Buenos Aires Philharmonic Orchestra] and the Orquesta del Teatro Colón [Orchestra of Colón Theatre]. At this institution, Gandini founded and directed the Centro de Experimentación en Ópera y Ballet. Gandini's flexibility to articulate a career full of creativity and innovation is noteworthy. His pieces also reflect that; among his compositions are piano sonatas, operas, and film soundtracks. The most representative musical works are the opera *La Ciudad Ausente* [The Absent City] (1995) and *Eusebius* (1985) in two versions for solo piano, and a different one for orchestra.

It is noteworthy that women composers are scarcely mentioned in the Argentine music scene, at least in books and scholarly research. Due to this situation, the Foro Argentino de Compositoras [Argentine Forum of Women Composers] (FAdeC) was established in 2004. This organization was founded by the composers Amanda Guerreño (b. 1933) and Irma Urteaga (1929–2022) with the purpose of performing and giving visibility to the oeuvre of Argentine

[84] Secretaría de Cultura, "Gerardo Gandini, Compositor de la Libertad Creadora," accessed December 1, 2025, https://www.argentina.gob.ar/noticias/gerardo-gandini-compositor-de-la-libertad-creadora.

women composers.[85] Even though the participation and recognition of women composers grew during the twentieth century in line with changing roles of women in Western societies, their participation as composers and performers in both tango and art music during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries remains largely unknown.

Stylistic Characteristics of Argentine Tango

In popular culture, Argentine tango is usually associated with the melancholy and nostalgia embedded in its character and lyrics. Nonetheless, the unique features of tango depend on parameters related to musical forms, melody, harmony, instrumentation, musical texture, and especially to rhythm. Rhythm is an important component of the style because initially, tango developed as a dance.

As tango evolved, it diversified into three different rhythms: tango, milonga, and *vals* [waltz]. In its beginnings, tango was characterized by a 2/4 meter with fast tempos. Eventually tango used slower tempos and a 4/4 time signature. The main precursor of tango was the milonga. The two varieties of milongas are the *milonga campera* [milonga of the countryside] with slow tempos, and the *milonga ciudadana* [milonga of the city] with a lively character, in 2/4 and with faster tempos. In both cases, the milongas were characterized by the use of dotted rhythms. The *vals* was especially popular in Buenos Aires due to the cosmopolitan character of the city and the increasing acceptance of tango as the twentieth century went by.[86]

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[85] Foro Argentino de Compositoras (FAdeC), "Sobre FAdeC," accessed April 12, 2026, https://sites.google.com/view/fadec/inicio/sobre-fadec?authuser=0.

[86] Kacey Link, and Kristin Wendland, "What Makes It an Argentine Tango?" in *Tracing Tangueros: Argentine Tango Instrumental Music,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 23–35. https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199348220.003.0002.

The texture is very important in tango, because the accompaniment patterns establish the beat and invite the dancers to represent the music with movement. The most common accompaniment patterns are the *marcato* and the *sincopa* [syncopation]. The *marcato* accompaniment presents quarters on a walking bass with chords that can vary in register and articulation.[87] In tango ensembles, the *marcato* will be distributed among the lower strings and piano, but the chords of the *marcato* will be presented only by the piano in the middle and upper registers. The *sincopa* accompaniment is a more complex type of accompaniment that includes more rhythmical variations. The rhythmical variations include the use of eighths combined in quarters, pick-ups, and different articulations. Another type of accompaniment is the 3-3-2, which was incorporated to tango from the *milongas camperas* directly. This pattern appears in 4/4 with eighths grouped by a dotted quarter note (3), the eighth note tied to the quarter note (3), and the quarter note on beat 4 (2).[88] Although this pattern is associated with Piazzolla's music, during the Guardia Nueva, composers such as De Caro already used this rhythm. This pattern of African influence may be called *tresillo* in other Latin American countries. Given that this term also means "triplet" in Spanish, this pattern will be referred as to 3-3-2 in subsequent chapters.

The melodies in tango are a distinctive part of the tango, and they can be of rhythmic or more melodic depending on the tempo of the piece, or if it is instrumental or has lyrics. Considering that the first *tangueros* [tango players] were Italian immigrants, melodies blend the lyricism of *bel canto* and the improvised chants of the *payadores*, who are *gaucho* singers that improvise rhymed lyrics accompanied by a guitar.[89] Tango melodies utilize all types of

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[87] Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 28–29.

[88] Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 31.

[89] Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 32.

embellishments rooted in the Baroque era, including appoggiaturas, turns, mordents, trills, and octave grace notes. Additionally, tangos present variations commonly performed by the bandoneon. The bandoneon is a type of concertina similar to the accordion and was created in Germany in the mid-nineteenth century. The bandoneon variations present virtuoso passagework with running notes. The variations provide interest to the pieces, and highlight the presence of the bandoneon, an instrument fully identified with tango.

In terms of harmony, tango composers traditionally remained within the framework of the common practice conventions with tonic, dominant and subdominant functions. The evolution of harmony in tango is comparable to the way that jazz or American songs mutated through time. In the first stages of tango, the German augmented sixth chord was quite popular. Tango composers denominated this chord *apoyatura*. After the 1950s, during La Era Dorada del Tango, other elements such as chromatic bass lines and extended chords were incorporated due to the influence of jazz on tango.

Instrumentation is another significant factor that defines the tango sound. Initially, tango ensembles of the Guardia Vieja included guitar, flute, violin, and bandoneon. During the Guardia Nueva, the tango ensembles were called *orquesta típica criolla* [typical creole orchestra],[90] and the configuration of the ensemble included two violins, two bandoneones, piano, and double bass. Subsequently, the orchestra expanded during La Era Dorada del Tango. During this period, tango orchestra of Osvaldo Pugliese had four violins, viola, cello, and four or more bandoneones. Eventually, during the 1960s, the orchestra became a sextet or a quintet. This time the ensemble had bandoneon, violin, guitar (either acoustic or electric), piano, and bass.[91] In recent years, the

[90] Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 26.

[91] Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 26.

flute has become associated with the sound of tango. Piazzolla's suite *La Historia del Tango* [The History of Tango] for flute and guitar reinstated the flute as a part of the palette of sounds of tango.

Regarding form, during the earlier days—Guardia Nueva and Guardia Vieja—tango works contained three-part forms imitating European classical structures, with A-B-A form using contrasting keys. If the tangos were in minor mode, the B section would be in major mode. During La Era Dorada del Tango, in the 1940s and 1950s, tango structure evolved to two contrasting parts with an A-B formal scheme.[92] Subsequently, during La Vanguardia, composers modified the form of tango using more complex structures or even compositional procedures such as fugues, which had an impact on the form of the tango.

Stylistic Characteristics of Western Art Music in Argentina

Regarding the characteristics of the style, it seems quite difficult to assign specific characteristics that encompass so many composers at the same time. The moment when Argentine music began to grow and professionalize also corresponds with a historical period in which an increasing number of composers started to develop their originality.

The first distinction among Argentine composers was whether they decided to incorporate vernacular material or not. Nonetheless, most Argentine composers decided to use vernacular material to some degree. The actual division varied between the types of vernacular material they would use, and the compositional techniques applied to them. Additionally, all the composers had an initial period in which their pieces mirrored the models they had learned during their education. This is especially true for the composers who studied abroad.

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[92] Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 35.

That said, there is a problem that is discussed by musicologists and seems to be present across all generations, which is the quest for a nationalistic discourse. The addition of vernacular elements is a concern for the composers of all generations. There are two important considerations regarding this topic. The first one is the type of contact that the composers had with the vernacular elements, that is, if the composer had an "authentic" relation with the style they are trying to incorporate. Although Williams was a pioneer in using folk into Argentine music, the criticism of the subsequent generations was that this contact with the genre was "artificial," and it did not occur because of an artistic pursuit. This means that the composers did not play folk tunes, and what they used in their compositions was a melodic gesture or harmonic sequence embedded with European techniques. Besides that, the nationalism in many European countries was a result of the defense of their national identity against an external enemy; this means that art mirrored a sentiment that was widely spread among the entire population.

As the twentieth century went by, the prejudices about the use of vernacular elements started to vanish. This occurred for two reasons: first, the composers of the Grupo Renovación were the first generation of Argentines whose parents were immigrants. As a result, they did not necessarily identify with the aesthetic taste of the establishment and had a more varied background that did not condition their artistic expression. The Grupo Renovación embodied these principles, and even though they used folk music in their compositions, it is clear that the influence of Bartók and Stravinsky ensured some more specificity in the musical elements that they employed. By this time, some composers studied abroad, while some others did so in Argentina. However, the influence of French music (or what was fashionable in France) influenced the Argentine composers. The popularity of Stravinsky in France and his visits to Argentina triggered the influence of Neoclassicism. At the same time, the composers of the

Grupo Renovación incorporated the use of tango and indigenous music into their pieces; however, this never occurred consistently. Unlike their predecessors, they were very concerned about the use of those styles and how to translate them into scholarly music.

The dichotomy in Argentine Western music is how to analyze the collective development of music in a context in which individual expression was ever more fostered and encouraged. The different "waves" of composers by Veniard offer a clear periodization of different generations, but did not describe specific styles. Because of that, the variations of the style are articulated by the main influence of the composers, that is, the teachers with whom they studied, and which vernacular elements they decided to use (when that occurred). As a result, the music of the end of the nineteenth century, and the first half of the twentieth century is mainly influenced by the French school (César Frank and Vincent D'Indy). In terms of the use of vernacular influences, the folk music of the Region Pampeana was the main type of folk music incorporated into the composer's style. This occurred both for the proximity of the composers to that part of the countryside, but also because it is the type of folk music that is more blended with the Spanish inheritance. The music of this region is the most authentic connection with the Spanish inheritance of the conquest. The folk music of other regions was much more influenced by the indigenous music of the First Americans of Argentina.

The 1960s ended with nationalism in the way that developed at earlier stages, and their music somehow followed the pathway that Juan Carlos Paz had during his lifetime. The different uses of atonalism and electronic music were an important characteristic of this period, but this style is outside the confines of the use of vernacular materials.

There seems to be a direct line connecting the Grupo Renovación, Ginastera, Piazzolla, and the most recent generations of composers, in connection with Claudia Montero. In all of

them, it is possible to see the influence of Stravinsky, whether in his Primitivist aspect or the Neoclassical period, and an exploration of timbre and coloristic harmonies traceable to French Impressionism. Although Ginastera did not have direct contact with folk music, he was still able to channel it into his works. The Primitivism he employed became central to the global perception of Argentine music, as it highlighted a distinctive national character. Similarly, in modern times, Piazzolla's music recreates this sentiment, although it does not adhere to the characteristics of Primitivism.

The History of the Piano Concerto in Western Art Music

The history of the concerto as a genre can be traced back to the late 16th century with the first known concerto.[93] The term concerto derives from the Latin term *concertare,* which means both "debate, dispute" or "work together with someone."[94] Interestingly, the development of the genre is somehow related to the origin of the word. Another important factor to understand the development of the piano concerto is the evolution of keyboard instruments during the Baroque and the Classical periods. In the case of the keyboard instruments, the genre started to develop with harpsichords, then fortepianos, and finally with the modern pianos. Considering the growth of the instrument in terms of size and sound, the concerto evolved from solo parts in close collaboration with the orchestra to more contrasting polarities between *solo* and *tutti*.

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[93] Simon P. Keefe, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Concerto* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), xii.

[94] Arthur Hutchings, Michael Talbot, Cliff Eisen, Leon Botstein, and Paul Griffiths, "Concerto," *Grove Music Online*, accessed April 2, 2026, https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40737.

During the Baroque era, J.S. Bach wrote several harpsichord concertos, among them the emblematic Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 in D major, BWV 1050. This concerto is considered one of the first keyboard concertos, featuring a virtuoso harpsichord cadenza. Subsequently, C.P.E. Bach contributed meaningfully to the development of the genre by composing nearly fifty harpsichord concertos. Additionally, during the transition from the Baroque to the Classical eras, chamber works with piano (or fortepiano) transitioned from featuring keyboard instruments playing only an accompaniment (*basso continuo*) to having a more prominent role. Although this occurred simultaneously with the development of the piano concerto, it was still a contributing factor giving the keyboard instruments more independent parts. Although during the Baroque period—and the transition to Classicism—the concerto did not have a specific form, by the end of this period, it was well established that the concertos had three movements alternating fast–slow–fast *tempi* with solos and *ritornellos* intertwined.

During the late eighteenth century, the fortepiano was already available to composers and performers of that time. At this time, the concerto began to have a more standardized form influenced by the allegro sonata and the sonata form overall. However, according to the music theorist William Caplin, to understand the concerto form only as a derivative of the sonata is a misinterpretation of the unique characteristics of the genre and ignores all the other significant influences in the evolution of the genre, such as orchestral traditions, improvisational practices, and the interplay between soloist and ensemble.[95] In this period, the piano concerto consolidated as a derived form of the Baroque *concerto grosso*, alternating *ritornellos*, solo parts, and *cadenzas* within the context of the traditional allegro sonata form.

[95] William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 243.

Originally, the *cadenzas* were improvisatory sections in which the performer would demonstrate virtuosity based on spontaneous inspiration. According to the late Classical era went by, the improvisation of *cadenzas* gradually disappeared. For instance, Ludwig van Beethoven wrote cadenzas for the three movements of Wolfgang A. Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor (K. 466). Then, by the beginning of the nineteenth century *cadenzas* started to be fully written.

Although Haydn composed piano concertos, Mozart took the genre to a new level of sophistication and virtuosity. Considering the performance practices of the period, Wolfgang A. Mozart—or even Joseph Haydn—did not write *cadenzas* for his concertos. Another important detail is that the piano parts of Mozart's concertos included the soloist participation even in the *tutti* sections.[96] It is most likely that this practice originated from the *basso continuo* typical of the Baroque sonatas.

During the nineteenth century, the concerto continued evolving alongside the innovations of the Romantic period. The concerto consolidated as a vehicle of instrumental technique. In that line, Frédéric Chopin wrote concertos in which the orchestra merely accompanies the soloist. Other composers, like Robert Schumann, cultivated the concerto as a poetic form, instead of a display of a predictable patterned rhetoric that Schumann observed in Beethoven's concertos.[97] Johannes Brahms composed orchestral parts influenced by Beethoven, bringing to the concertos a symphonic sound. Piano parts of his piano concertos, as much as the ones written by Clara Wieck, become piano parts as expansive as an orchestra. Therefore, the piano parts grew in sonority to match the powerful sound of the great nineteenth century orchestra. The summit of

[96] The Bärenreiter edition of Mozart's concertos includes piano parts in the *tutti* sections, but only in the full-score versions. These sections resemble the basso continuo of Baroque pieces.

[97] Hutchings et al., "Concerto."

virtuosity and coloristic orchestration in the genre is represented by Liszt, who incorporated the cyclic form into his piano concertos. Considering that during the Romantic era the composers were performers, and vice versa, the *cadenzas* evolved in complexity as well. Additionally, the genre became exceptionally popular, especially the concertos for piano.

In the twentieth century, the concerto remained one of the most popular genres in the concert halls. Besides the proliferation of concert halls and the growth of public, the twentieth century presented a much more diversified pool of composers from different countries and stylistic influences. Composers such as Sergei Rachmaninov continued the line of concertos of the Romantic era, while Igor Stravinsky and Paul Hindemith cultivated neoclassical forms with more modern compositional approaches.

Latin American composers such as Heitor Villa-Lobos (Brazil), Carlos Chávez (Mexico), and Alberto Ginastera (Argentina) produced innovative piano concertos that blended Western music techniques with vernacular elements from the composers' homelands, especially folk music. The influences of these composers vary according to the institutions they attended and the teachers they had. Composers such as Villa-Lobos were more influenced by Impressionistic composers, whereas Chávez and Ginastera identified with Stravinsky's Primitivism, using the orchestral and pianistic palette in all its splendor.

The History Piano Concerto in Argentina

The research on the history of the piano concerto in Argentina is not abundant; however there is one comprehensive study conducted by Dora de Marinis and María Emilia Greco. The purpose of the research was to track and collect the sheet music of all the piano concertos of Argentine composers. The timeline of the research ranges from 1912 to 1990. The first piano concerto written by an Argentine composer is dated 1912; this piano concerto was written by

Ernesto Drangosch, and the name of the work is *Concert E Dur* (or *Piano Concerto in E Major*), Op. 12.[98] Also, there are two other antecedents that have been influential at the moment of their premieres, although not as the first piano concerto of Argentine music. The following survey presents a summary of the main milestones of the piano concerto in Argentine music history; all the musical works are written by Argentine composers, except for one piece by the Spanish composer Jacinto Ortigala.

The piano piece with orchestra written by Arturo Berutti in 1879. This musical work was premiered one year later. The name of the piece was *Gran Capricho De Concierto para Piano con Acompañamiento de Orquesta Sobre un Baile Nacional* [Great Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra Based on a National Dance]. According to the chronicles of music critics, the work was orchestrated by Nicolás Bassi, who was the conductor during the premiere.[99] Unfortunately, this piece cannot be considered the actual antecedent, as the sheet music has not been discovered to date. The second case is a work by the Spanish composer Jacinto Ortigala (1877–1958), called *Rhapsodie Hongroise* for piano and orchestra. This work was partially published in 1904. Considering that this is the same year in which the composer migrated to Argentina, it is unlikely that this musical work was composed in Argentina. Additionally, the sheet music has not been found yet. That is why Drangosch's1912 piano concerto is considered the actual antecedent of the genre in Argentina.

According to the research conducted by de Marinis and Greco, at least until 1990, there are ninety pieces for piano and orchestra, written by fifty-one composers. Within that catalogue, fifty-five pieces have been found either in libraries or private collections, and the rest of them

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[98] María Emilia Greco and Dora de Marinis, "Obras para Piano y Orquesta en la Argentina" *Huellas*, no. 5 (2006): 17-40, https://bdigital.uncu.edu.ar/1224.

[99] Greco, and de Marinis, "Obras," 2.

are missing. Among all the composers found in the catalogue, it is remarkable that many composers were inclined to compose with string orchestras and percussion.

Considering the extensive musical activity in Argentina during the twentieth century, it is very interesting that many of the works that are part of the catalogue of concertos had national and international premieres. The piano concertos written by Ernesto Drangosch, Juan José Castro, Alberto Ginastera, Carlos Guastavino, and Gerardo Gandini will be considered for the historical overview of the genre in Argentina.

The piano concerto written by Ernesto Drangosh was premiered in Mar del Plata (Argentina) and the city of Buenos Aires in 1913. Drangosch dedicated this piece to Sigfrid Prager,[100] a German pianist and conductor.[101] Although the style of the concerto sounds post-Romantic and "universal," the last movement contains musical gestures compatible with the *habanera*, a Spanish dance that influenced tango.[102]

Juan José Castro wrote a piano concerto in 1941, which was dedicated to the Russian-American, Alexander Borowsky.[103] Yet, the premiere of the work took place in Buenos Aires, and the piano part was performed by Antonio De Raco in 1944.[104] Given that Castro had a wide

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[100] According to Prager's biography, it seems most likely that Drangosch and Prager met in Germany while Drangosch was studying at the Berlin Conservatory.

[101] J. Michael Allsen, "75 Years of the Madison Symphony Orchestra," accessed December 1, 2025, https://allsenmusic.com/HISTORY/MSO75chap1.html.

[102] Ana María Mondolo, "Ernesto Drangosch," accessed December 1, 2025, https://www.musicaclasicaargentina.com/drangosch/.

[103] Charles Hopkins, "Borowsky, Alexander," *Grove Music Online*, accessed September 1, 2025, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000042956

[104] Maria del Carmen Muñoz, "Juan José Castro," *Revista Instituto de Investigación Musicológica Carlos Vega* 12, no. 12 (1992): 142–143, https://repositorio.uca.edu.ar/handle/123456789/1337.

international recognition, this explains why the concerto was programmed several times in concert halls in Venezuela, Mexico, and the United States during the 1950s and 1960s.[105] From the stylistic point of view, Castro was deeply influenced by Neoclassicism. Castro alternated between three music styles: Nationalistic, Cosmopolitan, and Hispanic.[106] The piano concerto is in his Cosmopolitan style, in which there is a palpable influence of Prokofiev.[107]

Alberto Ginastera wrote three piano concertos; however, only the *Concierto No. 1* (1961) had been duly edited and published by Boosey & Hawkes. Concerning the other two, both pieces are programmed regularly, though the circulation of the sheet music is quite restricted. The *Concierto Argentino* [Argentine Concerto]—Ginastera's actual first piano concerto—was composed during the 1930s. After the premiere, in 1941, the composer decided to withdraw this composition from his catalogue, which is why this piece was not programmed again until the 1990s. The *Concierto No. 2* was not initially edited. Before the publication of the concerto by Boosey & Hawkes, only de Marinis was allowed to perform these two works.[108] Subsequently, Barbara Nissman had also been performing these two works as well.[109] Among

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[105] Alejandro Cremaschi, "This concerto was played several times in the 1950s by the amazing Puerto Rican pianist Jesús María Sanromá. It was performed during the 'Festivales de Música Latinoamericana'…" Comment on Collection CB4,"Juan José Castro, Piano Concerto (1941)." June 6, 2015, YouTube video, 33:44, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esPstJ28pbQ&list=RDesPst J28pbQ&start_radio=1.

[106] Unlike many composers of that historical moment, his styles are not periods. That is, Castro alternated the use of each style throughout his career.

[107] Andrea Ana Arese Elías, "The Piano Music of Juan Jose Castro." DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 1998, https://www.proquest.com/docview/304427765/CF59999E25CD4984PQ/ 1?accountid=12964.

[108] Greco, and de Marinis, "Obras," 27.

[109] Barbara Nissman, "Piano Concerto No. 2," accessed December 1, 2025, https://www.barbaranissman.com/piano-concerto-no-2.

the three concertos, the only one that has integrated nationalistic folk musical gestures is the *Concierto Argentino*. The other two piano concertos are much more dissonant, and they belong to the "neo-Expressionistic" period.[110] Both concertos contain references to pieces by Beethoven[111] and the second concerto to Chopin.[112]

Carlos Guastavino composed his piano concerto, *Romance de Santa Fé*, in 1952. The concerto has one movement (Allegro Molto), and it was premiered in 1954 at Teatro Colón. Guastavino played the solo piano part accompanied by the Orquesta Filarmónica de Buenos Aires, conducted by Juan Emilio Martini. *Romance de Santa Fé* presents the same characteristics as other Guastavino works. It contains folkloric material which merges seamlessly with Romantic melodic gestures and textures. In the same fashion as other Argentine composers, the orchestration includes strings and timpani.

Gerardo Gandini was a prolific and multifaceted composer and performer. His flexibility to compose *avant-garde* music and perform both art and tango music makes him a unique figure in Argentine music history. Gandini composed seven pieces for piano and orchestra in the style of *avant-garde* composers who composed atonal music. In some of his works he was inspired by Charles Ives, which led him to depart from tonality and explore timbre. The orchestration of his works is not conventional in the "classical" sense of the word. Given that he studied with the

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[110] Boosey & Hawkes, "Alberto Ginastera, Piano Concerto no. 1," accessed December 1, 2025, https://www.boosey.com/cr/music/Alberto-Ginastera-Piano-Concerto-No-1/5963.

[111] Boosey & Hawkes, "Alberto Ginastera, Piano Concerto no. 2," accessed December 1, 2025, https://www.boosey.com/cr/music/Alberto-Ginastera-Piano-Concerto-No-2/5074.

[112] Ginastera quoted a motif from Beethoven's *Piano Concerto no. 4* in the *Concierto no. 1;* whereas in the *Concierto no. 2*, Ginastera quoted the Theme and Variations in C Minor, WoO. 80, and the opening phrase from Beethoven's Sonata, "Les Adieux." The reference to Chopin is in the *Concerto no. 2*, in which Ginastera quoted the *Funeral March* from Chopin's *Piano Sonata in B-flat Minor*.

French pianist Ivonne Loriod[113] it seems likely he was exposed to pieces of Spectralist composers, such as Gerard Grisey.

Conclusion

Taking these concertos as a sample of the historical development of the genre, it is fair to say that such development did not have a linear progress. Drangosh was a piano virtuoso, and his compositions reflect that. Given that he died very young, he did not have enough time to depart from the influence of his teachers or the post-Romantic era influences. Composers such as Castro or Ginastera alternated different "styles" in different periods throughout their entire careers, but the concertos followed a universal style oriented to Neoclassical or *avant-garde* characteristics. Originally, Ginastera was interested in depicting nationalistic features, although his next concertos changed the course of his musical style in the genre. Guastavino was certainly the most traditional composer. The stylistic features of his output are also embedded in *Romance de Santa Fé* [Santa Fé Romance] as well. Gerardo Gandini was the composer less interested in following conventional parameters regarding instrumentation or style. In many pieces, Gandini created unique compositional techniques, and even though his style is atonal, his pieces are still original. Although it is difficult to assess how much Montero was exposed to these composers and their works, it is undeniable that she was directly or indirectly influenced by them.

It is striking how few women composers appear in Argentine history, and that the few ones who had a meaningful impact in Argentine music history did not write piano concertos. The research conducted by Greco and de Marinis only includes two piano concertos by women

[113] Last.fm, "Gerardo Gandini" accessed December 1, 2025, https://www.last.fm/es/music/Gerardo+Gandini/+wiki.

composers: Pía Sebastiani (1925–2015) and Fermina Casanova (b. 1936). Sebastiani and Casanova had significant careers, but did not transcend music history like Celia Torrá or Lita Spena did. Despite the efforts of organizations such as FAdeC, the works of Argentine women composers remain widely unknown. Because of that, until more research is conducted, it is not possible to determine the actual participation of women composers in the development of the piano concerto in Argentine music. The participation of women in tango history was always quite restricted as well. Although recent research showed that there were several women composers in the four periods of tango, it was always common knowledge that tango was a style that developed in predominantly masculine environments, even during Piazzolla's time.

In this context, the piano concerto written by Montero acquires a deeper layer of significance because *En Blanco y Negro* rectifies several historical gaps. First, this piano concerto incorporates tango as a vernacular source of inspiration. Originally, tango was highly disregarded in Argentine piano literature due to being the music of European immigrants, Afro-Argentines, and low socioeconomic sectors overall. Furthermore, it is a piano concerto written by a woman composer. Although this document covers the reception of the composer and the piano concerto, it does not study the concerto from a gender point of view. Nonetheless, this is a meaningful topic worth discussing in future research regarding Claudia Montero's oeuvre. While En Blanco y Negro did not receive the awards that other Montero concertos did, it remains a musical work worthy of study. Finally, *En Blanco y Negro* is the only one of its kind to have achieved such recognition among critics and the public. This suggests that the concerto resonated intensely with the collective unconscious of society.

Chapter 3: Life and Works of Claudia Montero

Biography of Claudia Montero

Early Life and Education

Claudia Montero was born on June 25, 1962, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and died on January 16, 2021, in Valencia, Spain.[1] Montero had a twin sister, Mercedes, who survives her. During her childhood, Montero studied piano and guitar. At the age of 13, Montero already knew that she wanted to be a composer.[2] Although music was an integral part of her life since her early childhood, after the composer finished high school, Montero enrolled in the university to study engineering.[3] Two years later, when she was 19, Montero decided to pursue music as her full-time career. After that, she continued her studies at the Conservatorio Alberto Ginastera [Alberto Ginastera Conservatory], in Morón (Province of Buenos Aires), where she studied piano, composition, and music education.[4]

According to Montero, her compositional style was defined when she was a student. One of her most influential teachers during her youth was Claudio Schulkin.[5] Schulkin is a musicologist and composer who teaches at the Conservatorio Ginastera harmony, counterpoint,

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[1] Francesc Serracanta, "Claudia Montero," *Historia de la Sinfonía*, accessed December 1, 2025, https://www.historiadelasinfonia.es/naciones/argentina/musica-en-argentina/montero/.

[2] Fernanda Lastra, "Claudia Montero: "Un Proyecto, en la Vida de Cualquier Persona, es el Motor" [For Any Person, a Project is the Engine of Their Life], *Música Clásica Buenos Aires*, October 25, 2020, https://musicaclasica.com.ar/claudia-montero-un-proyecto-en-la-vida-de-cualquier-persona-es-el-motor/.

[3] Lastra, "Claudia Montero."

[4] Lastra, "Claudia Montero."

[5] Música Clásica BA, "Compositores.Ar Cápitulo 3: Claudia Montero" [Argentine Composers: Chapter 3], July 19, 2020, YouTube video, 38:22, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uC9qFQTPag8.

and composition. During his career, he has taught many musicians of art and popular music. He has published his research about the unknown musical works of Friedrich Nietzsche in several Latin American journals. Schulkin helped Montero to learn standard compositional techniques, but also developed her own voice from the early stages. As a result, this opportunity allowed her to build her portfolio effectively with pieces to show and present professionally.[6]

There is a large biographical gap between the moment that Montero finished her studies and the moment she decided to continue her career in Spain. However, she kept composing and began to teach in institutions. In 2000, she was awarded the Premio de Composición René Teseo, and one year later, she was awarded the Premio de Composición ADOMU (2001) by the Music Teachers Association (Argentina). In December of 2001, Montero decided to leave Argentina due to a significant socioeconomic crisis. In one interview, Montero said that thanks to that "big crisis," she forced herself to migrate and change her life.[7]

Career in Spain

In December of 2001, Montero decided to migrate to Spain. Given that her father was from Spain,[8] Montero had Spanish citizenship. This decision was based on cultural affinity and practical convenience. She left Argentina as a single mother with her two children, Martin and Brian, who are twins. First, she established herself in Madrid, but a few months later, she moved

[6] Lastra, "Claudia Montero."

[7] Caso, Silvia de, and Dolz, Carmen, "Entrevista a Claudia Montero en Mujeres sin Edad" [Interview with Claudia Montero in Women without Age], November 7, 2018, YouTube video, 5:45, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqyA9WSVScY.

[8] Anna Mercedes Vernia Carrasco, "Entrevista a Claudia Montero" [Interview to Claudia Montero, *Artseduca*, no. 27 (2020): 92–94, https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7609949.

to Valencia, which would become her second home.[9] Once she was in Valencia, Montero attended the Universidad de Valencia [Valencia University]. At this institution, Montero completed the master's program in Musical Aesthetics and Creativity.

Claudia Montero was actively involved with organizations and associations that aimed to help women gain visibility in the artistic community. In the early 2000s, she co-founded the Women in the Arts of Valencia Association with other artists.[10] This association was created with the goal of promoting women artists with professional opportunities in order to break the glass ceiling for women composers and performers.[11] In an interview featured on the YouTube channel of this association, Montero declared that her most admired classical musician was the composer and pedagogue Nadia Boulanger.[12] It is noteworthy that Boulanger was probably the most influential teacher for Astor Piazzolla, who was also a significant influence on Claudia Montero's compositional style.

In 2002, Montero started to teach at the Conservatorio Salvador Seguí [Salvador Seguí Conservatory], in the city of Castellón; and subsequently she also taught at the Conservatorio Joaquin Rodrigo [Conservatory Joaquin Rodrigo] in 2011. Montero thoroughly enjoyed teaching, and it was an important part of her professional career. Montero declared that she really liked to use her practical experience to serve her students and to nurture herself with the freshness of her

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[9] Vernia Carrasco, "Entrevista."

[10] Claudia Montero, "Introducing Three New IAWM Members: Eve Duncan, Suzanne Knosp, Claudia Montero," *IAWM Journal: International Alliance for Women in Music* 17, no.1 (2011): 24, https://iawm.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Volume-17-Number-1-2011.pdf.

[11] AMCE, "Asociación de Mujeres Creadoras de Música en España (AMCE)", accessed February 9, 2026, https://www.amce.com.es/iquest-queacute-es-amce---what-is-amce.html.

[12] AMCE Mujeres, "AMCEXPONE Claudia Montero Sinfónico-Audiovisual," January 29, 2020, YouTube video 2:18, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn_8KQ0AbLo&t=29s.

students' ideas. Most importantly, Montero said that it was meaningful for her to inspire her students through her own career journey.[13]

In 2008, Montero created the O2 Project. O2 was an exchange program created to include musical works in concert programs by Asian composers that include traditional instruments. Montero was interested in promoting projects where underrepresented musicians or cultures were integrated in Western music concerts. The purpose of this project was to connect composers and musicians worldwide and encourage cultural exchange among different countries, emphasizing the presence of Asian composers' pieces. On behalf of this project, Montero coordinated concerts in Taiwan, Argentina, Spain, and South Africa.[14]

Because Claudia Montero composed musical works for ensembles and orchestras, the collaboration with musicians was an important component in Montero's career. One of the most important collaborators of the composer was Carlos Pascual. Pascual is a composer, conductor, and music pedagogue. Currently, he is the director of the Orquestra Lírica de Castelló [Lyric Orchestra of Castelló] and teaches composition at Escuela Superior de Música de Valencia [Higher Music School of Valencia]. His output includes musical works for orchestra, ballets, and soundtracks.[15] Pascual met Montero in 2006 while he was auditioning for the Conservatorio Seguí. Shortly after that, Pascual became Montero's composition student for two years. Besides the teacher-student bond that they had, Pascual became the producer of Claudia Montero's first

[13] Televisió de Castelló, "Plaça Major."

[14] Montero, "Claudia Montero," 24.

[15] ESMAR, "Dr. Carlos Pascual," accessed April12, 2026, https://esmarmusic.com/profesores/carlos-pascual/.

album, *Ausencias*, recorded in 2013.[16] Years later, Montero recommended Pascual as a conductor for concerts in Argentina and Taiwan, for the O2 Project.

Established Career

In December 2013, Montero travelled to Buenos Aires for the recording sessions of *Ausencias*. This album contained music for string orchestra and pieces featuring solo violin, viola, and cello with orchestral accompaniment. By that time, Montero was already writing pieces commissioned by recording artists; however, this album was the first album that Montero recorded entirely of her own compositions. Months later, Montero was nominated for her first Latin Grammy, in the category of Best Classical Contemporary Composition, for the violin concerto included in this album. After she won this award in 2014, Montero started to have more visibility and recognition in the international musical scene.

In 2015, Montero started the production of her second album, called *Irremediablemente Buenos Aires*. This time, Montero collaborated with the American String Quartet. The album includes compositions for string quartet and piano trio. One year later, Montero was nominated for the Latin Grammy in the same category and won the prestigious award again.

According to Montero, it was important for her to develop a career with a significant impact comparable to a pop artist. Although classical musicians usually do not have the same type of visibility as artists from other genres, she still believed in her development in the music industry. That is why, after this second album, Montero started to film music videos for at least

[16] Carlos Pascual, "Claudia Montero: la persona antes de la estrella" [Claudia Montero: the person before the star], *Nomepierdoniuna*, January 26, 2021, https://www.nomepierdoniuna.net/claudia-montero-la-persona-antes-de-la-estrella-por-carlos-pascual/. The events regarding Pascual's and Montero's bond were revealed by Carlos Pascual, in an article published as an homage to Claudia Montero after her death.

one of the tracks on each new album. Additionally, Montero considered herself a deeply visual person, and imagery was always present in the creative process of her compositions.[17]

In 2017, Montero started the production of her third album, named *Mágica y Misteriosa*. On this occasion, Montero worked with the Argentine conductor Lucia Zicos, who also collaborated with Montero in her first album, though the album was recorded with the City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra. The music works included in the album are her harp and guitar concertos. The soloists were Floraleda Sacchi (harp) and María Isabel Siewers (guitar). Also, 2017 is the year that Montero's piano concerto was premiered. *En Blanco y Negro* was premiered at the Galway International Arts Festival by the pianist Clare Hammond and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, conducted by David Brophy. Although this piece was premiered by Hammond, *En Blanco y Negro* was dedicated to Allison Brewster Franzetti. Originally, Allison Brewster Franzetti commissioned the piano concerto from Claudia Montero. Franzetti included the concerto in her album *Luminosa* (2017). This album features piano and orchestra pieces based on tango, and it was recorded by Franzetti with The City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Carlos Franzetti. The premier in Argentina occurred two years later by the pianist Nélida Sánchez and the Orquesta de Cámara Juvenil de Buenos Aires [Youth Chamber Orchestra of Buenos Aires], conducted by Alejandro Beraldi.

In 2019, the composer premiered a symphonic piece called *Ave Fénix* in Teatro Colón with the Orquesta Filarmónica de Buenos Aires. In this same year, Montero was diagnosed with cancer. During her fight against the disease, Claudia Montero continued working on all the commissions she had for orchestras of Europe and US. In 2020, Montero began a residence of the Palau de la Musica of Valencia for two years. The residency included the composition of a

[17] Música Clásica BA, "Compositores.Ar."

large work for voice, choir and orchestra, and a mentorship program for novel composers.[18] The mentorship program was going to be offered for eight composers (from any part of the world) in person and online, for those who could not attend to the meetings. Additionally, Montero intended that the composers interact with the orchestra of the Palau de la Musica, and it was projected that the pieces presented by the composers would be recorded by the orchestra, with the intention of helping young musicians build up their portfolio of professional compositions.[19] Succeeding Montero's master's at the Universidad de Valencia, the composer continued her doctoral studies at the same institution. She was writing a dissertation about the influence of tango and folk music in Argentine Western Art music.

Claudia Montero died on January 16, 2021, in Valencia. After Montero's death, a series of concerts were planned in her honor, both in Spain and Argentina by different ensembles and orchestras. Although having international recognition made Montero acknowledged in Argentina long before her death, her musical production became considerably more known and performed after 2021, both in Argentina and overseas. In 2022, Mercedes Montero produced Claudia Montero's posthumous album *Sueños Sublimes* [Sublime Dreams], which contains the piano concerto *En Blanco y Negro* and the bandoneon concerto *Vientos del Sur*. The soloists were Natalia Gonzalez Figueroa (piano) and Julio Coviello (bandoneon), accompanied by the Ensamble Ecléctico conducted by Lucia Zicos. Despite Montero's willingness to keep working until her last breath, her dissertation about the influence of tango and folk music in Argentine

[18] Ruth Prieto, "Claudia Montero y Leticia Moreno: Femenino Plural " [Claudia Montero and Leticia Moreno: Plural and Feminine], *Ritmo*, December 2020, https://www.ritmo.es/actualidad/entrevista-ritmo944-claudia-montero-y-leticia-moreno-femenino-plural.

[19] Música Clásica BA, "Compositores.Ar."

Western Art music and the *Sabat Mater*, a large work for voice, choir, and orchestra are unfinished.

Claudia Montero's Works

The total amount of Montero's compositions is thirty-six or thirty-eight, depending on the way the catalog is considered (see Table 3.1).[20]

Table 3.1: Claudia Montero's official catalogue of works by instrumentation

Instrument	Title
Piano	*Sonata en Mi* "Junio" "Septiembre" "Buenos Aires, Despierta y Sueña"
Harpsichord	*Incensum*
Harp	*Evocaciones*
Voice and Piano	*Alfonsina's Song Cycle*
Voices a Capella	"Yo, en el Fondo del Mar"
Flute and Guitar	*Suite de los Buenos Aires* (also arranged for flute and piano)
Guitar and Voice	*Tres Canciones Orilleras*
Chamber Works	*Buenos Aires en Tres* (piano trio) *Cuarteto para Buenos Aires* (string quartet) *Rincones de Buenos Aires* (string quintet)
String Orchestra	"Ausencias" *Rincones de Buenos Aires* (string orchestra version) *Sueños Azules*
Symphonic Works	"Preludio" "Rincones de Buenos Aires"(symphonic version) "Ave Fénix"
Concertos	*Concierto para Violín y Orquesta* (violin) *Mágica y Misteriosa* (harp) *Concierto en Blanco y Negro* (piano) "Elegía para Viola Solista" (viola) "Fantasía para Violonchelo" (cello) *Luces y Sombras* (guitar) *Vientos del Sur* (for bandoneon or accordion)

[20] Claudia Montero, "Musical Catalogue," accessed December 20, 2025, https://www.claudiamontero.net.

Unfinished Works	*Stabat Mater*

The *Suite de los Buenos Aires* has a version for flute and piano, besides the original one for flute and guitar; and the concerto *Vientos del Sur* has a version for accordion, in addition to the original for bandoneon. Furthermore, Montero composed pieces that were not mentioned in her official catalog of works, even though they were premiered, such as the orchestral work "Impressions from Shulin."[21]

Claudia Montero composed works for orchestra, chamber works, and solo piano pieces. It is possible to see how Montero sequenced her compositions based on the albums she released. Her first two albums—*Ausencias* and *Irremediablemente Buenos Aires*—show the composer's interest in exploring the strings in their capacity of soloist, as part of an orchestra, and in chamber music ensembles such as trios or string quartets. In her third album—*Mágica y Misteriosa*—Montero expands the timbre exploration to harp and guitar. Considering the wide range of pieces and the instrumentation of the works, Montero demonstrated a clear intention to compose works that explore a wide combination of timbres, types of ensembles, and musical genres.[22]

Regarding Montero's musical style, it is very clear that her identity was an important component in her compositional style. Most likely, due to Nadia Boulanger and Piazzolla, she understood the importance of being authentic to achieve originality, even if that means composing in less vanguardist music styles. At the same time, Montero fully embraced her

[21] Pascual, "Claudia Montero."

[22] The Appendix will present recordings of Claudia Montero's works. The discography includes her self-published albums, and it also features pieces performed by other instrumentalists.

connecting to tango as a means to achieve originality. During the interview for the *Journal of the International Alliance for Women in Music*, Montero stated:

> My musical roots are my life story. I was born in Buenos Aires, and I studied there, so the physical, musical, and emotional elements that come from the tango are in my DNA. Each of my compositions has an imaginary root that arises only for that work, like a child. But there is something that permeates all my music and relates to the tango.[23]

For Montero, music needed to be understandable and balanced.[24] Maybe because of that, she labelled her style as urban (due to her connection with Buenos Aires, and tango), and Classical-Romantic for the type of use of the musical forms, and the clear melodic lines in her pieces. Like many Argentine composers such as Williams or even Guastavino, Montero felt influenced by French music, most especially Maurice Ravel.[25] The composer was fully convinced of the need to express emotions through her music in ways that all listeners can easily connect with.[26] Furthermore, Claudia Montero considered it a personal victory that her music was reaching more people every time her music was performed, and that the public greeted her after concerts, thanking her for her music.[27]

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[23] Ruth Prieto, "An Interview with Claudia Montero: Winner of Four Latin Grammys," *IAWM Journal: International Alliance for Women in Music* 25, no. 1 (2019), 8.

[24] Prieto, "An Interview," 8.

[25] Ruth Prieto, "Claudia Montero: soy una mujer que contiene varias caras" [Claudia Montero: I'm a woman who has several personalities] *MundoClasico.com*, October 12, 2018, https://www.mundoclasico.com/articulo/31406/Claudia-Montero-soy-una-mujer-que-contiene-varias-caras-todas-con-el-mismo-rostro.

[26] Claudia Montero, "Entrevista Telecinco Nominación,", December 4, 2014, YouTube video, 1:15. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dK82AHUAaBA.

[27] Caso and Dolz, "Entrevista."

Claudia Montero's Piano Solo Works

Claudia Montero has four solo piano pieces in her catalogue, as well as another one that was originally written for harpsichord and has been adapted for piano. The repertoire for keyboard has not been published by a publishing company, although her solo piano music has been performed and recorded extensively in recent years.[28] Most of these works are based in short forms, except for the *Sonata en Mi* [Sonata in E].

The *Sonata en Mi* was premiered originally in the Cagliari Festival by the Argentine pianist Mariela Orzeszko.[29] The sonata contains three movements and has a total duration of 17 minutes. However, the third movement— Rondo in E minor—is the only one that has been recorded and performed in recent years. Additionally, this movement is the only one Montero distributed. It is unknown why the other movements are unpublished.

One of the unique features of the Rondo is its use of irregular time signatures, such as 10/8 intertwined with 8/8, 5/8, and 3/8. However, the eighth note remains the unit of the beat, which unifies the musical discourse. The A sections of the rondo present the typical rhythm pattern (3-3-2) present in Piazzolla tangos. This rhythmic pattern comes from the arpeggiation characteristic of the *milongas camperas* [milongas from the countryside] from La Pampa. The *milonga* is a genre of songs accompanied by guitar, considered the forerunner of tango.[30] The lyrics may use a question-and-answer format, and the songs' topics have a lighthearted mood.

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[28] The solo piano pieces included in this survey were accessed through Claudia Montero's personal archive. The materials were consulted with permission granted by Mercedes Montero.

[29] Mariela Orzeszko, "Mujeres en el Arte de Valencia," accessed December 15, 2025, https://www.geocities.ws/mujeres_arte/mariela.html.

[30] Simon Collier, "Milonga," *Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture*, 2nd ed., ed. by Jay Kinsbruner and Erick D. Langer, 603, Vol. 4. (Detroit, MI: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008), accessed May 2, 2026, https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/apps/doc/CX38903654/ GVRL?u=norm94900&sid=bookmark-GVRL&xid=c89f90eb.

The melodies tend to descend scale-wise, and the (3-3-2) of the guitar accompaniment creates contrast with the duple meter of the melody.[31] The B, C, and D sections are slower, marked as *meno mosso cantabile*. Although the texture presents a clear melody with accompaniment, there is also an intense counterpoint between voices; this Baroque technique is extensively present in Piazzolla's music, who was one of the main influences for Claudia Montero. The interpretation by Ana Lourdes Rodriguez demonstrates a detached articulation (*portato* or non-legato), which makes the bass sound like a bebop jazz bass line, another important influence for Piazzolla.[32] The piece is in E minor and contains a series of chromaticisms both in the melody and the accompaniment that configure a kind of lament bass. The chromaticisms in the context of the fast tempo produce the sad and agitated character of the piece. Because of the use of the *tenuto* articulation in this rhythmic frame and the extensions required to play the accompaniment patterns, this piece is level 10 in the Magrath leveling system, which is for advanced pianists transitioning to artist-level repertoire.[33]

"Buenos Aires, Despierta y Sueña" is a character piece in A minor that, from the beginning, incorporates lyricism, but in a way that contains fluent rhythmic motion.[34] The piece

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[31] William Gradante, "Milonga," *Grove Music Online*, accessed May 2, 2026, https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.18711.

[32] Pianistalatina, "Sonata in E minor," November 6, 2017, YouTube video, 4:58, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2gmpoeTqBM.

[33] Jane Magrath, *Piano Literature for Teaching and Performance* (Kingston, NJ: Piano Education Press, 2021).

[34] The pianist and composer Juan Maria Solare wrote an arrangement for saxophone and piano of "Buenos Aires, Despierta y Sueña." The recording of this piece is available to listen to on YouTube. Juan Maria Solare, "Buenos Aires, Despierta y Sueña," December 11, 2017, YouTube video, 2:43, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOAIKaumm_Q.

has a small introduction of eight measures with a chromatic ascent in the bass, which in the second part of the phrase becomes in a diatonic motion. This phrase finishes with a half cadence, which resolves to tonic in the first measure of the A section. This musical work has three sections of 16 measures each. The melody of sections A and B are very symmetrical in terms of contour. The accompaniment presents a four measure pattern, which varies according to the harmony of each phrase. Themes A and B are quite melancholic; they are in A minor with some minor tonicizations to close keys. The last section in A major provides a joyful or hopeful end to the piece. The last three measures offer a release of harmonic and rhythmic tension with an A major arpeggio, which provides a conclusive ending.

"Septiembre" is a character piece as well. This piece is very similar to "Buenos Aires, Despierta y Sueña" because it is a short piece, and the melody is eminently lyrical. The piece is in C major; however, the appoggiaturas of the melody make the piece melancholic. The harmonization of the melody—which uses descending thirds progressions—also reinforces the melancholic character of the piece. The accompaniment is patterned, but it varies according to the rhythmic balance between voices across the entire piece. "Septiembre" and "Buenos Aires, Despierta y Sueña" range between levels 6 or 7. Both pieces are ideal to develop expressive melodic lines with long phrases utilizing a wide exploration of the keyboard topography.

The last musical work—"Junio"—is listed in Montero's official catalogue, although this piece has not been recorded. This piece is in C minor, and according to Claudia Montero's indication, the piece should be played with improvisatory flair. From a rhythmic point of view, this musical work is the most complex of all Montero's piano pieces. It contains plenty of tuplets (irregular values) and syncopations. In comparison to the previous works, this piece is less predictable in terms of thematic development and texture, due to its improvisatory character.

That is why this piece is also more challenging in terms of coordination. This piece is level 10, and it is ideal for advanced students who need to study pieces that require a more refined level of musicianship. It also serves as an introduction to art piano music infused by tango.

Solo Piano Works: Stylistic Summary

Claudia Montero's solo piano pieces present homophonic textures, in which there is a distinctive melody, and an accompaniment displayed with some contrapuntal complexity. The chordal textures are presented to reinforce the lyrical character of the piece and introduce transitions or musical inflections. Overall, the hands play in the central register of the piano, though the left hand has more changes of position throughout the pieces. The accompaniments are patterned, but in some cases, they have subtle changes that complement the rhythmic flow of the melody in the right hand.

The influence of Piazzolla's music is visible in the patterns presented in the accompaniments of these pieces. The walking basses present in jazz or even Baroque polyphony are compositional signatures typical of Piazzolla's tangos. However, there are two elements that differentiate Montero's pieces from Piazzolla's style. First, Claudia Montero does not use lyrical themes only as a contrast to rhythmic A sections. The expressive melodic lines in many cases are presented from the beginning as a core part of her pieces, which gives the works a Romantic flair. The second distinctive feature is that Claudia Montero cultivated clear forms, with plenty of symmetry and balance between sections. This feature is evidenced by the contour of the melodies and the duration of the sections.

Chapter 4: Piano Concerto *En Blanco y Negro*

Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the piano concerto *En Blanco y Negro* by Claudia Montero from a stylistic and technical point of view. Considering that Montero was a Western Art music composer influenced by Argentine tango, the first section includes an analysis of Montero as a composer shaped by her homeland and identity. The second section articulates the main stylistic features of the concerto. The third section will discuss technical considerations for performance and teaching.

Claudia Montero: An Argentine National Voice in the Twenty-First Century

One of the biggest challenges for a composer is to channel their creativity without neglecting their identity and individuality. That is why one of the biggest conundrums of Argentine Western Art music is related to the concept of Nationalism, and how it was translated into piano literature. For many decades, the National voice of an Argentine composer was determined by the use of folk music.

Despite several composers trying to incorporate tango in the first half of the twentieth century, this only occurred in a few compositions in which the composer deliberately went outside the canon. The suites *Aquel Buenos Aires* (1970) by Pedro Sáenz and *Tangos* (1942) by Juan José Castro are pieces that foreshadowed the presence of tango in Argentine music. However, after the success of Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992) and his international recognition, by the 1980s the perception of tango changed; that is why many composers started to incorporate tango into Argentine music. Despite this, the current challenge for composers interested in incorporating tango is how to develop an artistic input beyond Piazzolla's influence.

Claudia Montero undeniably embraced tango as a means to manifest her national identity, but she did not limit herself to imitating Piazzolla. Her interest in making her music works

enjoyable for the public required her to innovate in unprecedented ways. The analysis of each movement will demonstrate how Montero translated her artistic ethos into the piano concerto.

Stylistic Analysis

I. *Decidido*

The first movement of *En Blanco y* Negro contains the character marking *Decidido* [Decided], just like the first movement of Montero's guitar concerto, called *Luces y Sombras* [Lights and Shadows] (2017). Moreover, the titles of the piano and the guitar concertos refer to contrast with similar semantic associations. *Blanco* [White] and *Luces* [Lights] are equivalent, just as *Negro* [Black] and *Sombras* [Shadows]. Finally, the title *En Blanco y Negro* can be also interpreted as a metaphor for the different ethnicities—European immigrants and Afro-Argentines—that by merging cultures ignited tango.

Additionally, the first movement of the guitar concerto is in rondo form, and so is the first movement of the piano concerto *En Blanco y Negro*.[1] This is something quite unusual in comparison with the traditional allegro sonata consolidated during the Classical era. The first movement presents a formal design in which the A section alternates with B and C sections multiple times, making this movement a seven-part rondo (see Table 4.1).

[1] Laura Rausell Saborit, "Aproximación a la Figura de Claudia Montero: Análisis del Concierto para Guitarra *Luces y Sombras*" [A Presentation of Claudia Montero: An Analysis of Montero's Guitar Concerto "Lights and Shadows"], *Revista Digital Notas de Paso*, no. 9 (May 2022), http://revistadigital2.csmvalencia.es/aproximacion-la-figura-de-claudia-montero-analisis-del-concierto-para-guitarra-luces-y-sombras/.

Table 4.1: Formal Design of I. *Decidido*

Instrumentation	Piano and String Orchestra (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, Double Bass)				
A **G Major**	***Introduction***	***a***	***b***	***a'***	***Transition***
	mm. 1–4	mm. 5–12	mm. 13–20	mm. 21–28	mm. 29–32
B **G Major**	***c***		***d***		
	mm. 33–38		mm. 39–46		
A **G Major**	***Introduction***		***a***		***b***
	mm. 47–50		mm. 51–59		mm. 60–66
C **G Minor**	***e***	***e'***	***e''***	***Transition***	***Cadenza***
	mm. 67–73	mm. 74–80	mm. 82–87	mm. 88–95	mm. 96–115
A **G Major**	***Introduction***	***a***	***b***	***a'***	***Transition***
	mm. 116–135	mm. 116–127	mm.128–135	mm.136–144	mm.144–147
B **G Minor**	***c***		***d***		
	mm. 148–135		mm. 136–162		
A **G Major**	***a***		***Codetta***		
	mm. 163–170		mm. 171–173		

The first A section starts with a four-measure introduction of the accompaniment by the string orchestra. This accompaniment follows a rhythmical pattern 3-3-2, which is traceable to many compositions by Astor Piazzolla. However, many tangos of the Nueva Guardia [New Guard] (1925–1935) already presented this archetypal subdivision pattern.[2] The melody is presented in measure 5 by the piano (see Figure 4.1).[3]

During the A section melody alternates between the piano and the orchestra, creating a fluid dialogue between *tutti* and *soli*. This interaction between piano and orchestra provides many

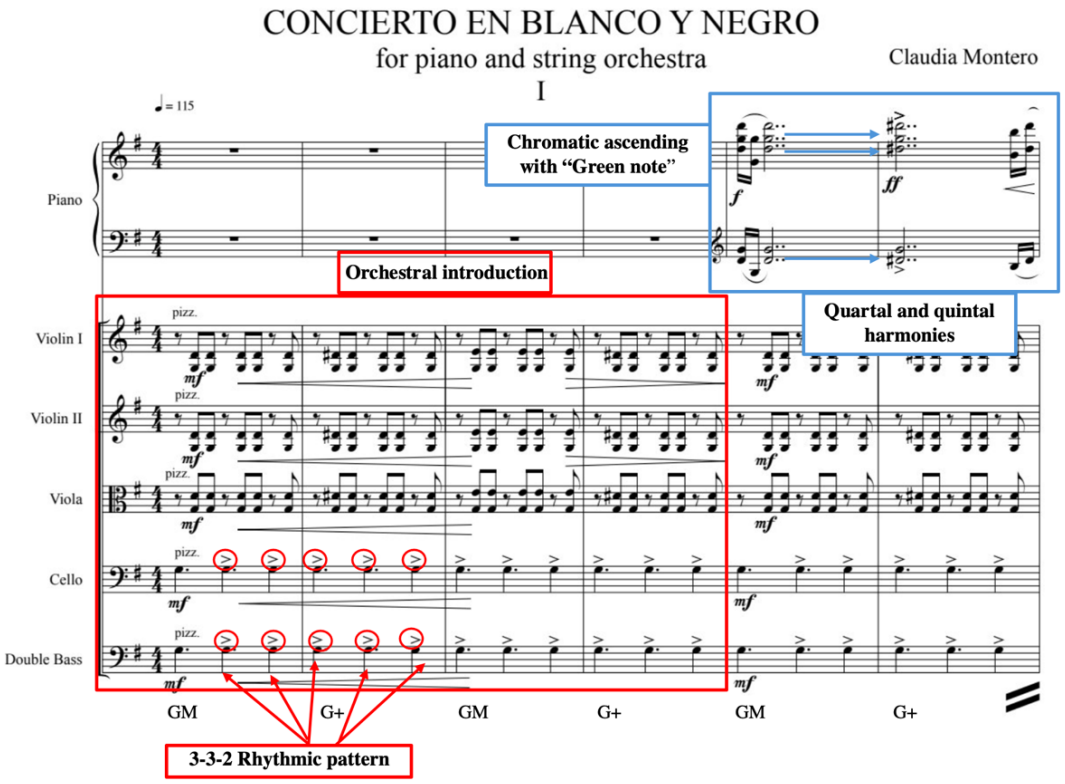
[2] Asato-Pais Tango, "Modelos de Marcación en el Tango: 3-3-2" [Metric models in tango: 3-3-2], August 7, 2021, YouTube video, 3:35, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOoqoh2CVPo.

[3] The published excerpts published in this document have been authorized by Eurindia Edizioni in an email dated April 16, 2026.

opportunities to display different accompaniment textures and increase the chronometric density.[4] The use of shorter and more frequent note values helps to alter the sense of time, as if theme A is faster as the section goes by. Consequently, tension is not only built up by the harmonies but also by the rhythm. The use of accents disrupts the flow of 4/4, the typical time signature in tango compositions. The piano textures with sixteenth notes across the entire keyboard topography are some of the features that contribute to increase the chronometric density throughout the A section (mm. 13–20, b; mm. 21–28, a').

[4] According to the Argentine composer and music theorist Carmelo Saita, the rhythm can be analyzed according to two factors. The first one is velocity which means that the beat will be slower or faster in regard the beat. The other one is called chronometric density; this concept is the number of sounds (or 'events") within the same beat. As a result, the chronometric density can be higher (if they are more sounds), or lower (if they are less sounds). Carmelo Saita, "Diferencia entre Densidad Cronométrica y Velocidad" [Difference between chronometric density and velocity], *Elementos del Ritmo Musical* [Elements of Rhythm in Music], (Buenos Aires: Educa, 2025).

Figure 4.1: I. *Decidido*, mm. 1–6



I. *Decidido* by Claudia Montero
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During the A section, melody alternates between the piano and the orchestra, creating a fluid dialogue between *tutti* and *soli*. This interaction between piano and orchestra provides many opportunities to display different accompaniment textures and increase the chronometric density. The use of shorter and more frequent note values helps to alter the sense of time, as if theme A is faster as the section goes by. Consequently, tension is not only built up by the harmonies but also by the rhythm. The use of accents disrupts the flow of 4/4, the typical time signature in tango compositions. The piano textures with sixteenth notes across the entire keyboard topography are some of the features that contribute to increase the chronometric density throughout the A section (mm. 13–20, b; mm. 21–28, a').

The harmony of the A section contains two distinctive features. The first is the use of quartal and quintal harmonies, and the second is the extended use of the augmented interval. During the twentieth century, many composers implemented the use of quartal and quintal harmonies. Nonetheless, Montero described herself as influenced by the French composer Maurice Ravel (1875–1937). Ravel used quartal and quintal harmonies in works in which he wanted to incorporate jazz influences to explore more modern sonorities such as in *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales* (1911) and *Le Tombeau de Couperin* (1914–1917). For example, the first measures of the first waltz of *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales* contain stacked notes in a similar way that Montero uses them in the A section. However, the level of dissonance in Ravel's piano work is considerably higher due to the use of extended chords. Unlike Ravel, Montero uses quartal harmonies with less dissonance not to shock the listeners, but to create suspense and excitement (see Figure 4.1). Interestingly, Ravel's piano concerto is in G major, the same key as *En Blanco y Negro*. However, the third movement of Montero's concerto concludes in G minor.

The reiterated use of the augmented interval from measure two onwards gives a mysterious air to the piece from the very beginning, and it is another contributing factor for increased the tension throughout the movement. According to the pianist Cristián Asato, tango composers of the beginning of the twentieth century used a compositional resource called the "green note."[5] The "green note" is a type of embellishment that appears as a whole step or half step to the fifth of the chord. In other words, the "green note" is a chordal sixth, either major or minor depending on the context. It was added to provide more interest to an arpeggiated accompaniment on the guitar, or even to a chordal accompaniment in a typical tango orchestra.

[5] Asato-Pais Tango, "La nota verde" [The Green Note], December 23, 2020, YouTube video, 4:52, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ck8Btck3oUo.

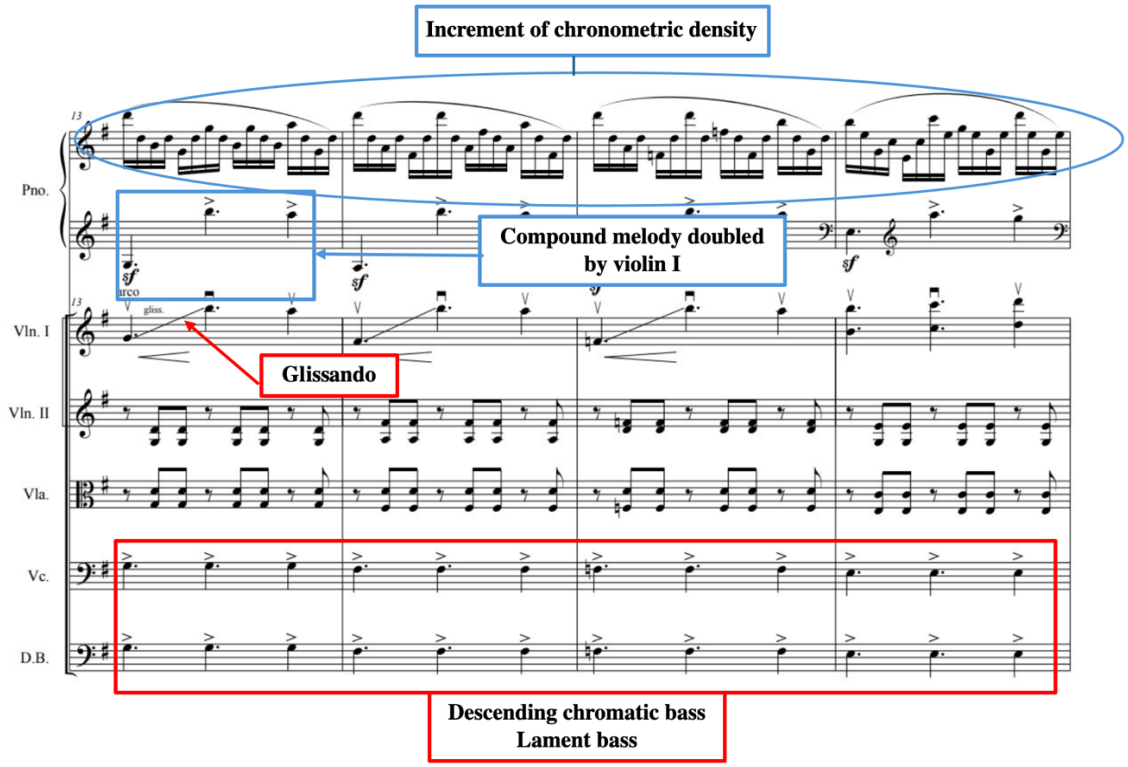
This stylistic resource is present in many *milongas camperas* [milongas of the country], and *milongas ciudadanas* [milongas of the city]. The "green note" in tango can be considered the equivalent of the "blue note" for jazz and blues styles. Although there is no evidence of Montero's knowledge of this stylistic element, the use of a recurring chromatism—the D-natural towards D-sharp—seems to embody the "green note" in a more modern way (see Figure 4.1).

The second phrase (mm. 13–20, b) has a melody assigned to the left hand of the piano and to the first violins. The great leap in the compound melody is bridged by the glissandos of the first violins. Another particularity of this section is that the lower line of the compound melody (doubled by cellos and double basses) is a chromatic descending line, which is a lament bass (see Figure 4.2). During the Baroque period, the lament bass was widely used in operas for dramatic purposes because it offered the composers the possibility of enhancing the expressive rhetoric and effective imagery of the text.[6] The translation of an expressive resource from vocal music into an instrumental genre reinforces the interest of the composer in connecting effectively with the audience, in this case, to convey sadness. Furthermore, the lament bass is a resource also used in pop music as well,[7] which suggests an intention of the composer to communicate sadness to the public in the most explicit way.

[6] Ellen Rosand, "The Descending Tetrachord: An Emblem of Lament," *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 65, no. 3 (July 1979):347.

[7] Bryn Hughes, and Kris Shaffer, "Classical Schemas (in a Pop Context)," *Open Music Theory*, ed. Erin K. Maher (Mountain View: Creative Commons, 2021), https://viva.pressbooks.pub/openmusictheory/chapter/classical-schemas/.

Figure 4.2: I. *Decidido*, mm. 13–16



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The third phrase (a') presents the same harmony and melody as phrase a. This time the accompaniment of the piano introduces the quartal and quintal harmonies in different registers of the piano with the 3-3-2 subdivision within the beat rather than across the measure. The rhythmic acceleration brings more excitement and agitation before the transition, which lasts four measures.

Based on the formal design of the movement, the A section is reiterated three more times throughout the movement. However, not all the A sections are complete. In the second and fourth restatements, the composer introduces a shorter version of the section. The second A contains the first two phrases (a-b), whereas the fourth A is a modified version of a'. This

modification transforms the section into a coda; therefore, the harmony was modified to end in the tonic (G major). These varied sections of A are reduced in order not to be too repetitive, but also to provide the unexpected for the listener. A literal repetition of the entire A section would make the piece excessively predictable.

The transitions between the A and B sections last four measures, and they alternate between G major and G augmented, as in the introduction of the accompaniment of the A part (mm. 1–4). In the transition between sections, the orchestra elaborates the first two measures of the theme, while the piano plays a series of arpeggios that anticipate the accompaniment of the B section. The overlap between the new and the old material makes a smooth connection between sections and helps to soften the character.

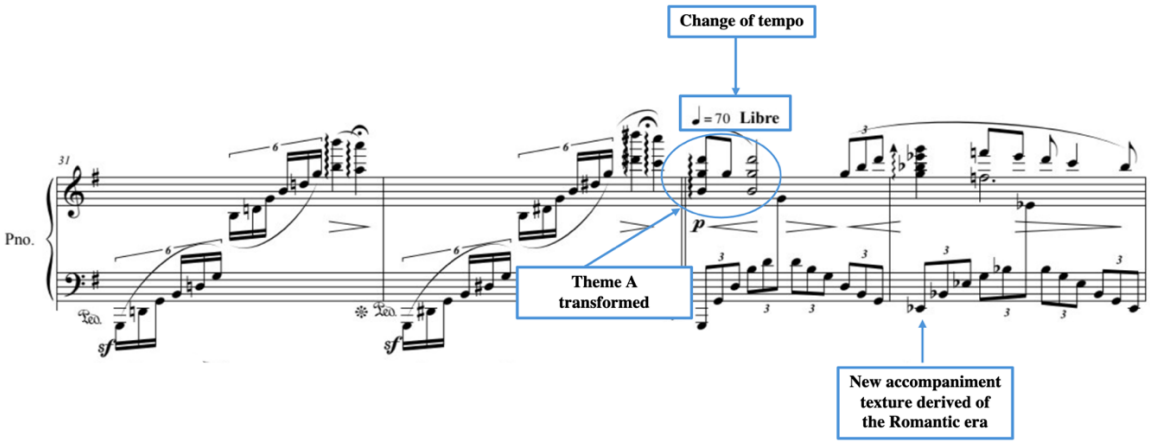
The B section is contrasting in many different ways; even though the orchestra and the piano interact, the protagonist of this section is the piano. The orchestra offers a harmonic support with a chordal texture, whereas the piano presents a harmonized melody that continues elaborating the motif presented during the A section. This elaboration provides cohesion throughout the entire movement.

In terms of harmony, this section does not present modulations to other keys. However, the harmonic progression is quite unconventional. The first part of the section alternates G major (G, B, D) with E-flat major (E-flat, G, B-flat). Although the composer does not intend to modulate from one key to the other using the common-tone modulation,[8] she uses this tonal relation as a tonicization, in which G and E-flat share the common tone G, and the E-flat major functions as a dominant of A-flat major. The relation with the E-flat major chord seems to be

[8] Bryn Hughes, "Chromatic Modulation," *Open Music Theory*, ed. Erin K. Maher (Mountain View: Creative Commons, 2021), https://viva.pressbooks.pub/openmusictheory/chapter/reinterpreting-augmented-sixth-chords/.

announced from the beginning of the movement, with the G augmented chord, which contains D-sharp, an enharmonic tone with E-flat major. After this coloristic progression, the rest of the section oscillates among standard chord progressions, ending in a tonicized half cadence. The dominant arpeggiation heightens the expectation for the arrival of theme A. The accompaniment texture of the section resembles the textures utilized by Romantic composers, such as Franz Liszt's *Consolation* no. 2, S.172 or the piano parts of the *lied* "Morgen" Op. 27 no. 4, by Richard Strauss (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: I. *Decidido*, piano part, mm. 31–34

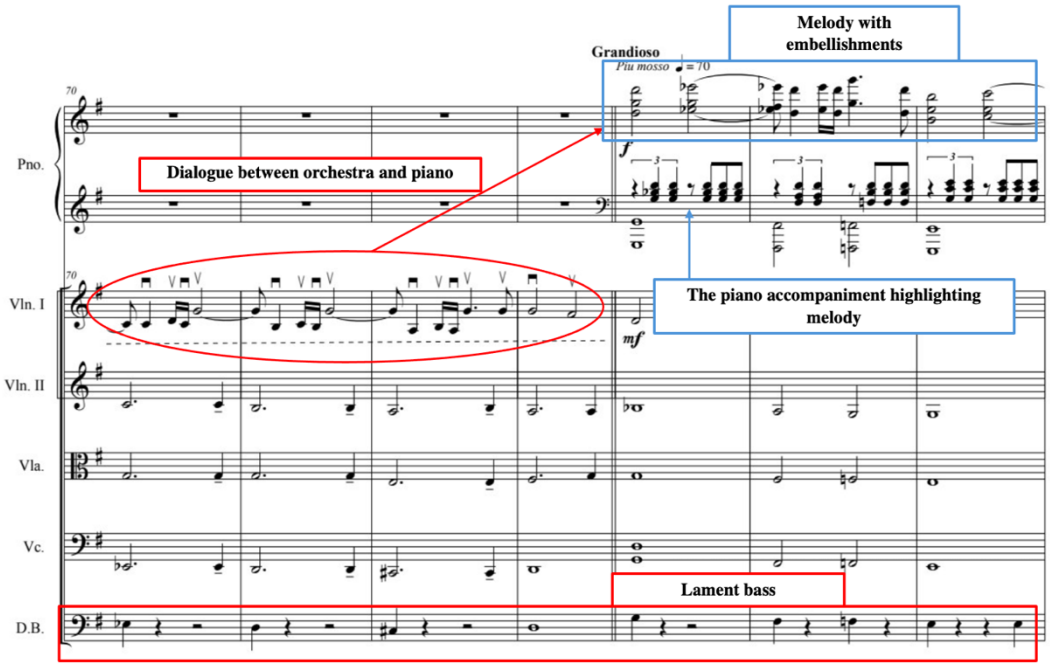


I. *Decidido* by Claudia Montero
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The C section is there is a change of mode (G minor), although eventually returning to G major. Despite the fact that the textures and themes are different from the prior sections, there is plenty of dialogue between *soli* and *tutti*, a common feature in the A section. Once more, the lament bass organizes the discourse for the first part of the section, the three phrases presenting a descending bass ranging from tonic to dominant. The melody of this section contains embellishments such as passing tones, suspensions, and echappés. The finesse and lyricism of this melody emulate the tangos of the Guardia Nueva [New Guard] of tango arrangers such as

Julio de Caro (1899–1980).[9] The piano accompaniment highlights the eloquence of the melody, especially when the melody is presented by the piano (see Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: I. *Decidido*, mm. 70–76



I. *Decidido* by Claudia Montero
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After the dialogue between piano and orchestra, there is another transition (mm. 88–95) by the orchestra, in which E minor is established as tonal center. The most interesting characteristic of this segment is that the double bass is not included in the choral texture. In this context, the absence of the double bass helps to create a warm and intimate sonority. Following this first part of C, there is a written cadenza. The cadenza is basically an elaboration of the piano in the B section and the four measures prior to the B section. The elaboration of B has a distinct melody, whereas the segment with arpeggios and a chordal melody is harmony-driven. This

[9] Javier Di Sanzo, "¿Qué es la Guardia Vieja?" [What's the Old Guard?], December 15, 2023, YouTube video, 0:59, https://www.youtube.com/shorts/5GhSFwfZXX0.

means that the emotional impact of the section is more important than any underlying narrative introduced by the melody.

After the third repetition of A, the following B section in fact condenses both parts of B and C. In one of the last interviews she gave, Montero mentioned that she enjoyed cinema thoroughly, and that she was interested in composing soundtracks for films.[10] This is something reflected in her music and this elaboration of B, which works as a flashback of past events. On this occasion, B contains the beginning of section B and the first phrase of C, as if these two themes merged into a new one. It is interesting to notice that all the sections of the piece, including the written cadenza, are juxtaposed throughout the entire movement. Every section continues the previous one until the end of the movement without significant pauses or silences. Moreover, sections often end with a tonicized half cadence, which heightens the expectation of arrival at the next theme. Additionally, there are no significant breaks or silences between sections, such as a medial caesura separating transitions from new themes.

The interventions of the piano and orchestra always occur in the shape of dialogue between forces or integrated into the texture. The contrast of the piece is not given by the opposition forces (*tutti* and *soli*), but by the different themes and emotional states displayed through the entire movement. This thematic and emotional *yin-yang* can be related to the semantic poles of the title of the concerto, and the complementarity between sections that produced a unified discourse between the piano and the orchestra.

[10] Música Clásica BA, "Compositores.Ar Cápitulo 3: Claudia Montero" [Argentine Composers: Chapter 3], July 19, 2020, YouTube video, 38:22, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uC9qFQTPag8.

II. *Quasi una Passacaglia*

The second movement t is a theme and variations in C minor at a slow tempo, organized around the ground bass just like an ancient passacaglia. Although the use of the passacaglia is unusual, the use of theme and variations have antecedents in the piano concerto. Mozart wrote two piano concertos in which the second movements are theme and variations in C minor. The concertos are the *Piano Concerto No. 22* K. 482 and *Piano Concerto no. 24* K. 491.

Although there are plenty of composers who adopted many Baroque forms during the past century, this movement has a resemblance to "Sentimental Saraband," the third movement of *Simple Symphony*, by Benjamin Britten. This music work is for string orchestra and presents similar "choral" textures with a *cantabile* melodic line and a tragic character in the outer sections.

The formal design is a theme which lasts ten measures, followed by five variations with the same number of measures, and a coda (see Table 4.2). Each variation is divided into one phrase of six measures (antecedent) and four measures (consequent). After the variations, the coda in C major that softens the dramaticism of the sections in minor mode. Despite the fact that there are no other signs of a bigger subjacent structure, the variations can be grouped in pairs of two, because there are textural elements that make them sound related. Throughout the entire movement there are no changes of tempo and significant pauses that divide the sections, besides the cadences of each part.

Table 4.2: Formal Design of *Quasi una Passacaglia*

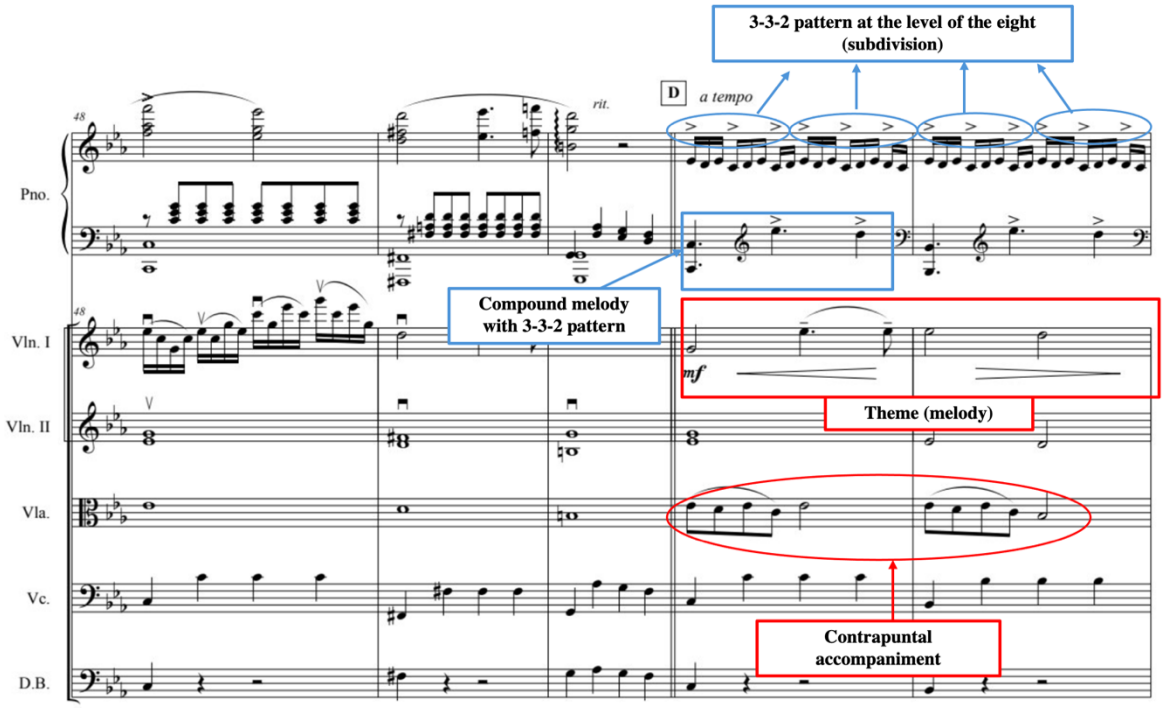
Instrumentation	Piano and String Orchestra (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, Double Bass)	
Theme	C Minor	mm. 1–10
Variation 1	C Minor	mm. 11–20
Variation 2	C Minor	mm. 21–30
Variation 3	C Minor	mm. 31–40
Variation 4	C Minor	mm. 41–50
Variation 5	C Minor	mm. 51–60
Coda	C Major	mm. 61–72

The melody is repeated in all the variations with no change except the instrumentation and texture. Considering that on many occasions the lyrics of tangos are inspired by melancholic and sad stories, the fact that the melody is so melodramatic can be attributed to the influence of tango. The first two variations are only for the orchestra, growing in density as the movement develops and more instruments are added. The first variation is for low strings (cello and double bass), and the second one incorporates the upper strings (violin I, violin II, and viola). After the incorporation of the piano, from the third variation onwards, there is an increase of contrapuntal movement between voices, which increases the tension and brings more complexity to the piece. The piano carries the melody in the third variation, though in the fourth one presents a contrapuntal accompaniment that is presented by the strings in the fifth variation.

The last variation (no. 5) is the most innovative of all. The composer overlaps the 3-3-2 subdivision within the beat at the compound melody and within the subdivision of the accompaniment (see Figure 4.5). Without question, this is one of the most important features of

the movement because it helps to create the climax of the movement. Usually, this subdivision is only employed in rhythmical and fast pieces because is a derivative of the *milongas ciudadanas*.[11] The use of this rhythm pattern in this movement is unique.

Figure 4.5: II. *Quasi una Passacaglia*, mm. 48–52



II. *Quasi una Passacaglia* by Claudia Montero
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The coda in C major compensates for the emotional and tragic development of the movement, introducing a new texture for the piano and a melody with plenty of ornamentation, this time organized in symmetrical phrases of four measures.

[11] For a complete description of the musical characteristics of the *milonga ciudadana*, refer to the section Stylistic Characteristics of Argentine Tango, Chapter 2.

III. *Enérgico*

The third movement, *Enérgico* [Energic], provides a compelling end to the concerto. It is organized as a compound ternary form (ABA'), in which B contains a written cadenza integrated with the A sections (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Formal Design of III. *Enérgico*

Instrumentation	Piano and String Orchestra (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, Double Bass)			
A **E Minor**	***Introduction***	***a***	***b***	***a'***
	mm. 1–4	mm. 5–15	mm. 16–27	mm. 28–36
B **E Minor**	***c***	***c'***	***Cadenza***	
	mm. 37–51	mm. 52–66	mm. 67–92	
A' **G Minor**	***Introduction***	***a***	***b***	***Coda***
	mm. 93–96	mm. 97–107	mm. 108–122	mm. 123–133

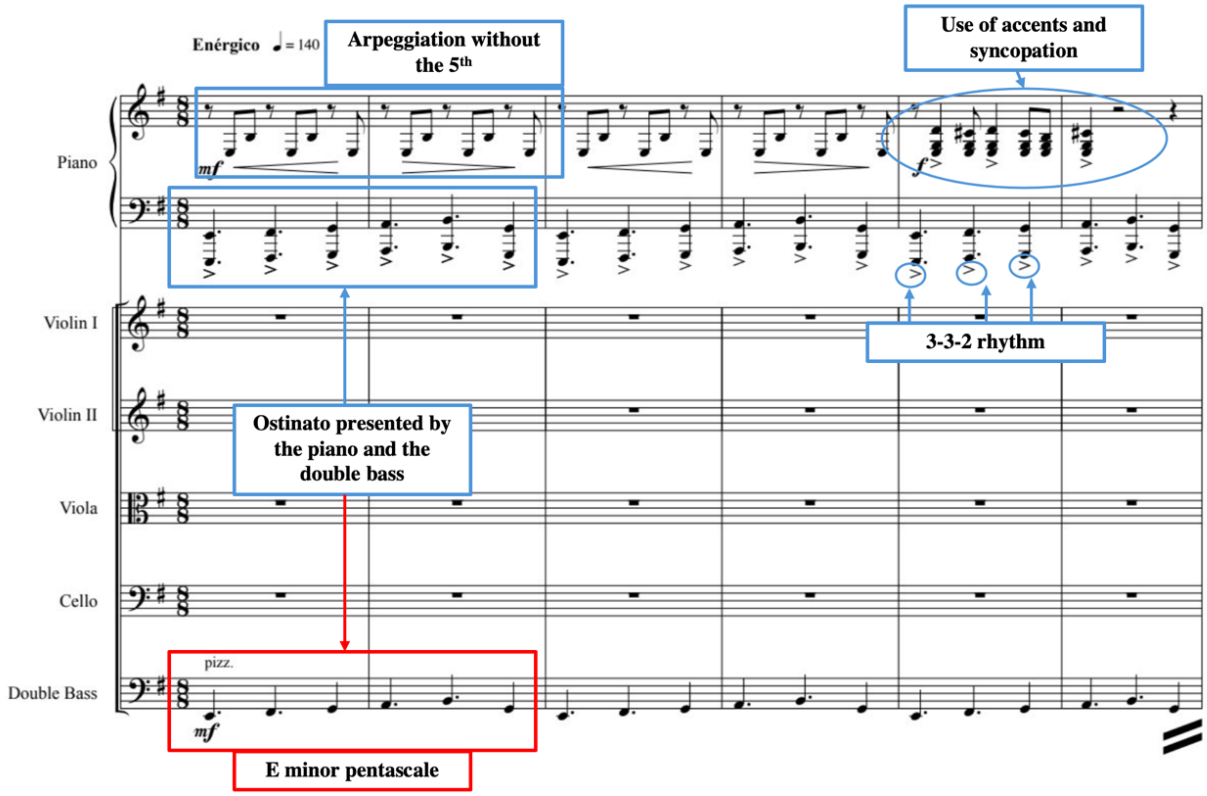
The rhythmic feature of the 3-3-2 subdivision is characteristic of the A sections in this movement as well. However, there is an important differentiation between the first and the third movement: the first movement has a 4/4 as a time signature, and the third movement has an 8/8 as a time signature. This means that the subdivision pattern 3-3-2 will be present as a fundamental element of the movement. Although Montero reinforced the subdivision by adding accents in the piano part, the accents are more of an expressive resource to emphasize the melody not to clarify the subdivision. Additionally, the syncopations in the main theme are another important rhythmic element that provides a sensation of unpredictability within the entire section. The syncopation of the melody suggests the type of *fraseo* [phrasing] characteristic of tango singers, which modified written melodies for expressive purposes. The effect of the *fraseo* can be compared with a *rubato* that occurs within the measure.

The A section is in E-minor, and it is organized around an ostinato pattern based on the E minor pentascale. The ostinato lasts two measures and is presented in the low register of the

piano and the double bass in the orchestra. It is interesting to note that the piano is present from the beginning of the movement. The first four measures introduce the texture with the characteristic pattern of the *milongas camperas*.[12] The accompaniment pattern contains a stable bass, followed by an arpeggiation in which the third of the chord is omitted. In measure five, the right hand introduces the melody, which is based on a stepwise motion between white and black keys. This oscillation among black and white keys is produced due to the use of the Dorian mode, which brings a lighter mood into the seriousness of the ostinato pattern presented in low registers. This is another occasion in which the polarity between white and black—or vice versa—is displayed in the concerto. First, through the oscillation between the white and black keys, and second, between the two "characters" due to the use of the Dorian mode (see Figure 4.6).

[12] For a complete description of the musical characteristics of the *milonga campera,* refer to the section Stylistic Characteristics of Argentine Tango, Chapter 2.

Figure 4.6: III. *Enérgico*, mm. 1–6



III. *Enérgico* by Claudia Montero
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Even though there are no significant changes in terms of modulations, the B theme presents a contrasting character. Considering that themes A and B are complementary, they can be analyzed as a *yin-yang* polarity.[13] If the A section can be identified with the *yang* pole, understanding that as extroverted and tempered, the B section can be identified with the *yin* pole, presenting an introspected and melancholic character. It is interesting that the A section is quite rhythmic, it has a fast tempo, and a dynamic dialogue between *tutti* and *soli*; whereas B

[13] The use of the traditional Eastern definition of Yin-Yang, as two complementary and opposite forces that form a whole, helps to understand the interrelation of themes as a part of an entirety.

essentially presents a single slow *cantabile* theme and a written cadenza, elements that give this section an improvisatory nature.

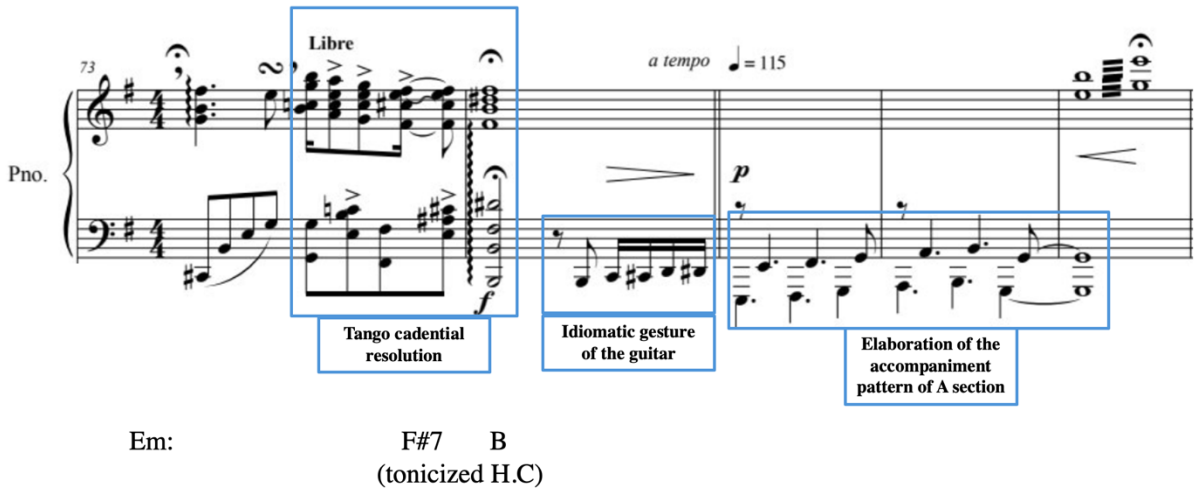
The theme presented in B has a lament bass, a shared characteristic with the previous movements. Although there are changes of register in the bass that may hide the chromatic descent, it is still possible to follow the bass and listen to the implicit sadness of this segment. It is remarkable that once more, Montero used the *milonga* pattern (3-3-2), in the *cantabile* theme as in the last variation of the second movement. This element makes the movement cohesive, considering that the same stylistic element is used with two contrasting themes throughout the entire movement. In this case, it seems particularly important to mention that the texture in this section mirrors idiomatic musical gestures of the guitar accompaniments of the *milongas camperas* which subsequently were incorporated by tango.

The cadenza is divided into three sections, the first one beginning with an elaboration of the B theme and containing two phrases. The melody is intertwined with descending chromatic scales, which could be considered an embellishment called *volata*.[14] The *volata* has been described as an ascending scale usually at the beginning of a phrase.[15] Although Montero does not use the *volatas* in the traditional definition way, the fact that the scales are descending, and chromatic creates cohesion with the rest of the piece and the concerto. The ending of both phrases introduces a traditional tango metric model typically used in tango for important closing cadences of sections or phrases. The cadence presents a bass line on the downbeats alternated with chords, whereas the melody presents a syncopated rhythm with plenty of rubato (see Figure 4.7). The indication "libre" [free] reinforces this slower motion that concludes with a fermata.

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[15] Joan E. Smiles, "Directions for Improvised Ornamentation in Italian Method Books of the Late Eighteenth Century," Journal of the American Musicological Society, Vol. 31, no. 3 (1978): 506 https://doi.org/10.2307/831368.

Figure 4.7: III. *Enérgico*, mm. 73–74



III. *Enérgico* by Claudia Montero
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The middle part of the cadenza is considerably freer in terms of thematic development. The alternation of motifs, combined with sudden changes of register and virtuosistic bravura octaves and fast scales, makes this segment probably the one with the greatest improvisatory flair of the entire concerto. Because the rest of the concerto has musical discourse built up with clear melodies, the fragmentation of this section suggests an inner dialogue or meditation within the narrative of the movement.

The final part of the cadenza introduces a new theme with a melody accompanied by a modern version of an Alberti bass, rooted in the Classical era. The bass line moves consistently in descending chromatic motion. Because the composer chose to use the middle and high register of the piano, this emphasizes the softness and sentimentality.

According to the formal design, the repetition of A is quite literal, but instead of ending in E minor, this section is in G minor. The only structural difference is the addition of the coda in

m. 123, which is based on the b phrase. The coda ends with a *glissando* played by the piano and the orchestra. The *glissando* at the end of a tango is a fundamental element that appears in the end of many tangos. The final chord is followed by a *glissando* which ends in the lowest register of the piano and the orchestra, providing a satisfying ending even though the piece finishes in a minor key.[16]

Notes for Performance and Teaching

As it was observed in the musical analysis, *En Blanco y Negro* contains a great deal of contrast between its movements and sections. Because of the influence of tango in this concerto, an optimized learning process should address musicianship and technique from early stages of learning.

Rhythm and Phrasing

Rhythm is a fundamental element that needs to be worked out from the beginning. The use of the 3-3-2 pattern indicated with accents is a common feature of the three movements and different textures. The use of the pattern at the level of the beat and in the subdivision makes it imperative to understand how the accents interact with the different musical textures.

Considering the alternation of themes of the rondo form movement of the first and the compound ternary form of the third movement, the alternation of themes implies a change of character, which will have an impact on technical means. Where rhythm was the dominant element of the A section, melody will become the dominant element of the B section. Additionally, the changes of tempo may emphasize the features of each theme.

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[16] Asato-Pais Tango, "Tutorial Piano Tango-Glissando" [Tango Piano Tutorial-Glissando], May 15, 2020, YouTube video, 13:01, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ht4mQugeESg.

Texture

En Blanco y Negro is a concerto in which the piano and the orchestra hold a more fluent interaction than in conventional concertos. Therefore, the role of the piano varies according to the different textures presented in each movement. In the first type of texture, the piano presents the melody, and the orchestra presents the accompaniment. In this type of texture, the melody needs to be projected beyond the orchestral accompaniment. The presentation of the theme A in the first movement exemplifies this interaction between piano and orchestra.

In the second type of texture, the piano duplicates the musical material of the orchestra, and it is important that the piano merges with the *tutti*. These segments present similarities to Mozart's piano concertos, in which the piano has a *basso continuo* part in addition its actual solo parts. In these segments, the piano needs to merge with the orchestra. This type of texture is displayed at the beginning of the third movement, before the right hand of the piano introduces the melody.

The third type of texture is usually reserved for solo sections, such as the cadenzas of the first and third movements, and the presentation of theme A in the fast movements. In these segments, the piano part has a soloist role. However, considering that the piano part has both melody and accompaniment, the balance between hands presents the same challenges as any homophonic piece. Due to the contrapuntal nature of the second movement, some sections contain more musical complexity. Because of the expressiveness of the movement, the melody will always need to be highlighted, especially in the third and fourth variations.

Instrumentation

Despite piano's powerful and rich sound, on occasion, an orchestration that includes brass instruments can easily interfere with the balance between piano and orchestra.[17] The fact that Montero's orchestration only contains strings helps to build up a balanced sound between *tutti* and *soli*. The instrumentation of this concerto follows the unusual trend of many Argentine piano concertos, that include orchestrations with string orchestras. This suggests a preference of Argentine composers for string instruments. Additionally, tango ensembles of the Nueva Guardia [Nueva Guardia] and the orchestras of La Era Dorada del Tango [The Gilded Age of Tango] always contained upper and lower strings and piano, the same instrumentation as this concerto.

Passagework and Cadenzas

The passagework of the concerto tends to be present in the most rhythmic sections of the first movement. The A section of the first movement has sixteenth notes with frequent changes of position. During the transitions or the *cantabile* sections, the passagework requires alternation between hands. The use of running notes in embellishments requires a rhythmic adjustment to the phrasing of the melody, especially in the third movement. The *cantabile* sections include several types of accompaniments, which are intended to give flexibility to the phrasing. Regarding the idiomatic guitar textures of the third movement, they require a layered distribution of sound, in such a way that the melody remains audible above the accompaniment.

It is noteworthy that the cadenzas are fully integrated and notated into the movements. Although this layout offers a direct thematic connection with the entire movement, it also implies that the pianist must prepare to perform these sections without stopping the flow of the music.

[17] George Gershwin's Piano Concerto in F exemplifies this observation. In the most climactic parts of the third movement, if the orchestra does not adjust the balance between the brass section and the piano, the orchestra can easily cover over the piano interventions.

An important antecedent of this type of cadenza is the one of Beethoven's *Concerto No. 5* "The Emperor," in which Beethoven indicated *non si fa una Cadenza,* indicating that the cadenza was fully written, and the performer should follow the sheet music as in the rest of the piece. In terms of difficulty, the integration of the cadenzas, the frequent changes of position on the keyboard—specially in the first movement—makes it difficult to compare them with other concertos. Therefore, this concerto is in between Haydn's *Piano Concerto in D Major Hob. XVIII:11*, and Poulenc's *Piano Concerto in C-Sharp Minor FP 146*.

Memorization and Performance

Because Claudia Montero composed a concerto in which the formal scheme is so symmetrical and balanced, this work is especially suitable for those pianists interested in developing analytical memory effectively. Even though this is a contemporary piece—and it does not necessarily follow the conventions of Classical era concertos—all the movements contain a symmetrical and balanced form. This feature makes the concerto ideal for developing analytical memory alongside technique and musicianship. Depending on the pianist's development, this concerto could be assigned after the preparation of a Haydn concerto, as a contrast between the traditional concerto form and the innovations introduced in Claudia Montero's concerto.

Summary

En Blanco y Negro is a contemporary music work aligned with Neoclassical style conventions. The use of recognizable sections shows the composer's deep interest in providing an audible narrative. The incorporation of tango elements in the concerto is another link to

Neoclassical composers. During the development of Neoclassicism, many composers revisited ancient dances in a similar way that Montero incorporated tango.

Tango—as a dance form—inspired the construction of the A themes characterized by rhythm-driven patterns. In contrast, B themes and the second movement are inspired by tango songs with high levels of melodic elaboration, such as the melodies of instrumental tangos of the New Guard [Nueva Guardia], or even the tango songs of Carlos Gardel. Although Claudia Montero employed Baroque elements such as polyphonic voice leading, melodic embellishments, and ornamentation, they differ significantly from the way Piazzolla utilized them in his works.

In terms of harmony, Montero innovated by using quartal and quintal harmonies, yet she never departed from tonality. The use of the augmented chord, the lament bass, and the coloristic chord progressions contributes significantly to making her works even more accessible. This is especially notable because these elements can also be found in pop music songs with low levels of dissonance, a fond trait in *En Blanco y Negro*. The melodic lines present clear phrases that often feature numerous contrasting melodic gestures.

The thematic difference between sections, or the textures of the piano and the orchestra, are means to convey different emotions with a compelling rhetoric. The knowledge of such features will optimize the preparation of the concerto. A learning process that purposely connects musical ideas with technique will result in effective playing of accents, expressive phrasing, efficient changes of position on the keyboard, and the flexibility in adapting to diverse accompaniment textures. The proper management of these technical components will help the pianist to deliver an interpretation full of artistry and emotion.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The evolution of Western music was conditioned by external factors beyond the composer's creative endeavors or the aesthetic principles of an artistic movement. The development of Western music in Argentina is not an exception. During the late nineteenth century—when Argentine art music expanded significantly—Argentine composers began to incorporate folk music, hence igniting the musical Nationalism. Argentine Nationalism was deeply infused with folk music into their pieces, even when the background of the composers did not have specific connections with the culture of the rural areas. As a result, most Argentine piano literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is inspired by themes and music related to the mythology surrounding the *gaucho* (the South American countryman) and the countryside.

Historians initially related the origin of tango to the migratory waves of the end of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, the birth of the style contains an unprecedented complexity that fuses all the social actors of society, including the participation of Afro-Argentine musicians and the exchange between the city of Buenos Aires with rural districts. Although tango diversified as the twentieth century progressed, it always remained a taboo cultural item, at least in Argentine society.

During the twentieth century, the incorporation of tango into Argentine piano literature was more of an exception than a rule. In different periods, composers such as Ernesto Drangosh (1882–1925), Juan José Castro (1895–1968), and Pedro Sáenz (1915–1995) employed tango style elements in their works. These composers mirrored the aesthetic trends of the Guardia Vieja (1880–1925) [Old Guard], the Guardia Nueva (1925–1940) [New Guard], and La Era Dorada del Tango (1940–1955) [The Gilded Age of Tango].

After the presence of the Grupo Renovación, it was a fundamental requirement that composers had direct contact with the vernacular sources they were employing. Most likely, this was a reason why other composers of the mid twentieth century did not to use tango in their works. Despite the increasing social acceptance of tango as a cultural commodity, the barriers between popular and cultured music remained quite high until the 1990s. Therefore, the lack of contact with the style made art music composers reluctant to incorporate tango in their works.

Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992) was a transformational figure in the development of popular and art music in Argentina. The artistic guidance of composers such as Alberto Ginastera and Nadia Boulanger, the collaborations with jazz musicians, and the exchange with Argentine rock musicians made his music a catalyzer of many different artistic movements which confluence in his musical works. Yet, Piazzolla's music had a more significant impact on musical works for bandoneon or string instruments, and not as much on piano pieces. After Piazzolla's death began a new generation of composers who grew listening Piazzolla's music and started to compose incorporating tango into their works. Claudia Montero belonged to that generation along with composers such as Juan Maria Solare (b.1966) and Pablo Aguirre (b. 1961), among others.

Claudia Montero (1962–2021) is one of the most acclaimed Argentine contemporary composers, who embraced Piazzolla's music and tango overall as an essential part of Argentina's cultural capital.[1] Although Montero was inspired by Piazzolla, her innovations go beyond Piazzolla's legacy. The piano concerto *En Blanco y Negro* is the first Argentine piano concerto that openly incorporates tango as a vernacular source of inspiration.

[1] The term "cultural capital" was created by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in the article "Social Space and Symbolic Power," *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 7, no. 1 (1989): 14–25, https://doi.org/10.2307/202060. In this article, Bourdieu describes non-financial assets such as culture or education, which contribute to social mobility in stratified societies.

Furthermore, Montero crafted her compositions combining different musical elements with the ultimate goal of communicating effectively with the audience. The use of lament bass, ancient dances, 3-3-2 subdivisions, and the modern "green note" are only a few musical elements that make her piano concerto an exceptional musical work with high levels of elaboration. Many modern or contemporary musical works were designed to inspire awe in the listener, but not necessarily as a means of artistic expression. The evocative images in the titles of her pieces and the cinematic rhythmic motion of textures make it possible for the public to build up a narrative as the piece unfolds. Moreover, the sematic associations with the titles of her pieces and most especially *En Blanco y Negro* resonate in unique ways with tango, and the mixture of Afro-Argentines, the European immigrants and the creole community. The confluence of all those musical cultures was essential to the creation of tango and to the incorporation of tango as a vernacular source of inspiration.

During her lifetime, Montero was awarded four Latin Grammy awards on three different occasions. Two of those awards were for her *Violin Concerto* and Guitar Concerto *Luces y Sombras* [Lights and Shadows]. This suggests that the composer was especially interested in the genre. Moreover, the piano was among the favorite instruments of the composer, who was also a pianist. Pianists transitioning to artist level can perform and analyze this work as a pivotal piece for more advanced repertoire and enhance musicianship while developing technique.

Claudia Montero wrote this piece in 2017; thus, this concerto is among her latest compositions by Montero. As a result, *En Blanco y Negro* is a work of a mature composer that channels high levels of creativity and elaboration. In a period in which Western art music competes with many other styles in the current music scene, Claudia Montero composed a piano

concerto—and an entire catalog of works—that reconciled the constant social gap among highly cultured and popular audiences, not only for Argentine society but for the world.

Although modern times allow for greater general knowledge of past and present Latin American composers and their oeuvres, that does not necessarily mean those pieces had the same impact as Claudia Montero's piano concerto. Since its premiere in 2017, *En Blanco y Negro* has been performed in many countries, including Colombia, Ireland, and Argentina, and has been recorded by internationally renowned artists such as Allison Brewster Franzetti and Natalia González Figueroa.

After the latest research about tango origins and the contributions of Afro-Argentine musicians to tango, *En Blanco y Negro* not only promotes Argentine culture but also acquires a whole new layer of symbolism. The fact that Claudia Montero wrote a piano concerto—one of the most popular genres of Western music—using tango, a marginalized style for almost a century, reconciles tradition with cultural identity.

This piano concerto was written by a woman composer. Because of the lack of representation of contemporary women composers from Latin America and Argentina, this concerto occupies a very special place in the context of the piano literature. It is a contribution as a composition, but it also reclaims space for women composers in Argentina and among Latin American composers.

Suggestions for Future Research

The limited research about Claudia Montero's musical works for piano, chamber works, and the incorporation of tango in Argentine piano literature provides a number of opportunities for further research. The potential topics for scholarly research are:

1. An analysis of her piano solo pieces. Although Chapter 3 offered an overview of Claudia Montero's solo pieces, the analysis can be potentially expanded to offer a deeper contextualization of Montero's solo piano works. Additionally, Montero wrote a piece called *Incensum* for harpsichord, which is another opportunity for analysis.
2. Chamber works with piano include the piano trio *Buenos Aires en Tres*, *Alfonsina's Song Cycle* for voice and piano, and the version for flute and piano of *Suite de los Buenos Aires*.
3. An study of Claudia Montero's oeuvre from the gender studies point of view. The intersection of social sciences with musicology generates a lot of possibilities for research in regards to Claudia Montero, and other women composers incorporating tango into Argentine music.
4. The incorporation of tango into Argentine piano literature by contemporary composers. Although in recent years musicologists have started to research tango in Argentina, this research has mainly included piano pieces by Juan José Castro. Claudia Montero belongs to an entire generation of composers influenced by Piazzolla, who also incorporate tango into their pieces continuing the legacy of this composer. The pianists and composers Juan Maria Solare (1966), Pablo Aguirre (1960), and Saúl Cosentino (1935) have an extensive body of works for solo piano, piano four hands, or chamber works with piano.

5. The contributions of tango pianists to the development of technique for piano and piano arrangements. In the same fashion as in the Romantic era, tango pianists were composers and performers. The arrangements by pianists such as Carlos Salgán contain a great level of elaboration and technical considerations worth analyzing.

In summary, Claudia Montero's piano concerto *En Blanco y Negro* is a musical work that incorporates Argentine tango into Argentine art music, channeling the composer's artistry and her cultural inheritance. Although Montero passed away in 2021, the composer was invested in advocating for the representation and acknowledgment of women in the arts, and most especially for women in music. Considering that tango always evolved in predominantly masculine environments, the fact that Claudia Montero used tango in her compositions increases the level of significance of her piano concerto and her entire catalog of works. Although much remains to be explored in Claudia Montero's works, the legacy of her oeuvre is invaluable. *En Blanco y Negro* was the first piano concerto infused with tango and it resonated with the collective unconscious of society.

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Appendix: Claudia Montero's Discography

Claudia Montero's Albums

*denotes Latin Grammy award

Title and Contributors	Works Included
Ausencias (2014) Orquesta de Cuerdas de Buenos Aires Dir.: Lucia Zicos Violin: Daniel Robuschi Cello: Marcelo Bru	*Violin Concerto** *Rincones de Buenos Aires* [Corners of Buenos Aires] "Fantasía para Violonchelo" [Fantasy for Cello] "Ausencias" [Absences]
Irremediablemente Buenos Aires (2016) The American String Quartet Flute: Luciana Fernunson Guitar: Rubén Parejo B3 Brouwer Trío	*Cuarteto para Buenos Aires* (string quartet)* *Suite de los Buenos Aires* (flute and guitar) *Buenos Aires en Tres* (piano trio) *Rincones de Buenos Aires* (string quintet)
Mágica y Misteriosa (2018)* The City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra Guitar: María Isabel Siewers Harp: Floraleda Sacchi	Guitar Concerto *Luces y Sombras** Harp Concerto *Mágica y Misteriosa*
Sueños Sublimes (2022) Ensamble Ecléctico Dir.: Lucia Zicos Bandoneon: Julio Coviello Piano: Natalia González Figueroa	Bandoneon Concerto *Vientos del Sur* Piano Concerto *En Blanco y Negro*

Additional Claudia Montero's Recordings

Title and Contributors	Works Included
Luminosa (Sunnyside Communications, 2017) The City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra Dir.: Carlos Franzetti Allison Brewster Franzetti, piano	Piano Concerto *En Blanco y Negro*
Kaleidoscope (Naxos, 2024)* Isabel Dobarro, piano	"Buenos Aires, Despierta y Sueña"
Sisters of the Moon (Eudora, 2024) Susana Gómez Vázquez, piano	"Buenos Aires, Despierta y Sueña" "Rondo"

Ethereal (Virtuoso Records, 2024) Cecilia Foj, piano	"Buenos Aires, Despierta y Sueña" "Septiembre"
Tango sin Fronteras (Clarinete Mestizo, 2024) Javier Vinasco, clarinet Pedro Salcedo, violin Carlos Betancur, piano	*Buenos Aires en Tres*
Single (Mercedes Montero, 2023) Tanja von Arx, flute Natalia González Figueroa, piano	*Suite de los Buenos Aires*
Skyscraper Soup (Naxos, 2025) Alena Walentin, flute Niklas Johansen, guitar	*Suite de los Buenos Aires*
Saiga Antelope (Solo Musica, 2025) Victoria Kaunzner, violin	*Violin Concerto*
Evocaciones de la Lluvia (2024) Ana María Archilés, guitar	*Evocaciones* *Tres Colores Porteños* *Tres Canciones Orilleras* "Lágrimas de Buenos Aires"