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Serialism in Latin America

Koellreutter and Catunda, representatives of Brazil, seem to have it easier on their outpost in South America than their colleagues in Europe. Koellreutter, who emigrated from Germany to Brazil in 1936, introduced twelve-tone music to Brazil as a professor at the conservatories in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. The lack of musical tradition and prejudice makes it easier for the unusually talented Brazilians to access music that is considered avant-garde and daring in Europe but has already found an enthusiastic audience in Brazil.

Willi Reich, paper manuscript for the preparation meeting of the First International Twelve-note Congress, Locarno (December 1948)¹

Considering my great responsibilities, as a Brazilian composer, before my people and the new generations of creators in musical art, and profoundly concerned about the current orientation of the music of young composers who, influenced by misconceptions, joined Dodecaphonism – a formalist current which leads to the degeneracy of the national character of our music – I resolved to write this open letter to musicians and critics in Brazil. Through this document, I want to warn you about the enormous dangers that at this moment profoundly threaten the entire Brazilian musical culture to which we are closely linked. [...]

Introduced to Brazil a few years ago by citizens of countries where musical folklore is impoverished, dodecaphonism was warmly welcomed by some unprepared spirits. [...]

Dodecaphonism [...] is a characteristic expression of a policy of cultural degeneracy, a branch of the wild fig tree of cosmopolitanism that threatens us with its deforming shadows and whose hidden aim is the slow and harmful work of destroying our national character.

Camargo Guarnieri, 'Carta aberta aos músicos e críticos do Brasil' ('Open Letter to the Musicians and Critics of Brazil', December 1950)²

In his influential *Music in Latin America*, Gerard Béhague has divided the music of the subcontinent into the dominant 'folkloristic nationalism' and 'counter-currents'.³ Dodecaphony and serialism, the subject of this chapter, form but one of the many and disparate 'counter-currents' in Béhague's account. Both the individual terms and the notion of a binary between them can be and have been critiqued,⁴ but it is largely true that serialism's adherents tended to view themselves as an avant-garde in opposition to the nationalist establishment which dominated musical life throughout Latin America at virtually every level. This state of affairs lasted until roughly the 1960s, when the serial avant-garde managed to gain a modicum of mainstream and institutional acceptance, although by

¹Quoted from Daniela Fugellie, *'Musiker unserer Zeit': Internationale Avantgarde, Migration und Wiener Schule in Südamerika* (Edition Text + Kritik, 2018), 342.

² Reproduced in Carlos Kater, *Música Viva e H.J. Koellreutter: movimentos em direção à modernidade* (Musa Editora, 2000), 119-24: 120. See also <<https://fredericomb.files.wordpress.com/2016/09/guarnieri-carta-aberta.pdf>> (accessed 8 April 2020). I would like to thank João Pedro Cachopo and John Fallas for help with the translation.

³ Gerard Béhague, *Music in Latin America: An Introduction* (Prentice-Hall, 1979).

⁴ The most fundamental criticism has come from Ricardo Lorenz in 'Voices in Limbo: Identity, Representation, and Realities of Latin American Composers', <<http://ricardolorenz.com/research/realities-inside-the-limbo/>> (accessed 13 April 2020); see in particular chapter 4: 'Latin American Nationalism Deconstructed'. Among recent scholars who have moved beyond Béhague's binarism, see Alejandro L. Madrid, *Sounds of the Modern Nation: Music, Culture, and Ideas in Post-Revolutionary Mexico* (Temple University Press, 2008).

that point the link between serialism and the avant-garde became increasingly tenuous. As will be seen in more detail, the history of dodecaphony and serialism in Latin America thus to an extent mirrors that of its counterparts in Europe and North America, but with some notable peculiarities. This history not only provides an important facet of the subcontinent's music history, but it also touches on crucial issues beyond that, such as the way artistic innovations are disseminated; the role of migration and national, regional and international networks, among them the importance of the ISCM; the varying connections between aesthetic ideas and ideological and political principles; and debates about progress and tradition, national culture and universalism. As in other regional contexts, the focus on dodecaphony and serialism allows and indeed requires looking beyond genius composers and canonical masterworks, since many of the key figures feature at best as footnotes in general histories of twentieth-century music, and seminal works may have been heard by only a handful of people; indeed, many have been lost entirely.

It goes without saying that this short account cannot provide comprehensive coverage of any and all approaches to dodecaphony and serialism in such a large and diverse area. The adoption of dodecaphony has varied widely across the region: while it gained a foothold in a Europeanized metropolis such as Buenos Aires as early as the 1930s, it failed to make a significant impact in other areas before the 1950s or '60s, if at all. As will be seen, there were two regional dodecaphonic networks that seemed to have been largely independent if not oblivious of one another: one in the South, centred on Argentina, Chile and Brazil, and another in the North, centred on Panama, Venezuela and Mexico.

The history of serialism in Latin America starts in 1934 with *Primera composición dodecafónica* (appropriately enough) by Juan Carlos Paz (1901-72). Paz was largely self-taught, and, with the exception of a period of study in Paris during which he did not focus on composition, rarely left Buenos Aires. In 1929, Paz joined forces with Jacobo Ficher, Juan José Castro, José María Castro and Gilardo Gilardi, the leading, broadly nationalist and neoclassical composers of the day, to found the Grupo Renovación, which, in 1932, became the Argentine section of the ISCM. Paz's early work was in a similar style to the other composers within the Grupo, and he switched from (extended) tonal and bitonal composition to twelve-note technique without an intervening period of free atonality (or any other method, for that matter). This may be a reason why, for him, dodecaphony seemed to be allied to atonality and both were opposed to nationalist and neoclassical approaches and aesthetics.

According to Daniela Fugellie's account, Paz reported in a letter from January 1934 to his friend, the German-Uruguayan musicologist Francisco Curt Lange, that he was working on a 'Composition on the Twelve Notes'. In his memoirs, Paz reported that he had become aware of dodecaphony through the four-part article that Schoenberg's student Egon Wellesz had published in the Parisian journal *La revue musicale* in 1926 – a relatively general article that largely avoids technical issues; in addition, he had a score of Schoenberg's Woodwind Quintet Op. 26 (1923-24), one of Schoenberg's earliest twelve-note compositions.⁵ What proved decisive for his further development was his work as secretary for the Grupo Renovación, through which, in its capacity as Argentine section of the ISCM, he entered into correspondence with many European composers, many of whom pursued similar ideas. Fugellie has listed Paul Pisk (Austrian section), Alois Hába and Karel Reiner (Czechoslovak section), Józef Koffler (Polish section), Slavko Osterc (Yugoslav section), Alfredo Casella and Gian Francesco Malipiero (Italian section), Paul Sanders (Dutch section) and Edward Dent (President), in addition to further individual composers.⁶ Many, although not all, of these were twelve-note composer or closely allied with Schoenberg: Pisk, for example, was, like

⁵ Fugellie, *Musiker unserer Zeit*, 149.

Wellesz, a Schoenberg pupil, and he became one of the most important contacts for Paz and his circle.

The most immediate support for Paz, however, came from Koffler. When Paz sent his first twelve-note composition for consideration at the ISCM's Annual Festival 1935 in Prague, Koffler, a member of the jury, wrote back to Paz correcting his technical and stylistic mistakes. For his part, Koffler, who was not from Schoenberg's immediate circle, had himself received a similar letter from Schoenberg to whom he had sent his *15 Variations on a Twelve-note Series* Op. 9a.⁷ Paz's composition was rejected, although his Passacaglia for Orchestra Op. 28 would be performed during the ISCM's Annual Festival 1937 in Paris, as had his pre-dodecaphonic Sonatina for Flute and Piano in Amsterdam in 1933 (his post-dodecaphonic *Galaxias* for Organ would follow, shortly after his death, in Graz in 1972).⁸ Without ever holding any official position or having much success in the legitimate concert business, Paz seemed to have lacked the means to attend these, or any other, international events.

In addition to the European composers listed above, Paz would over time also enter into exchanges with North-American correspondents, including Ernst Krenek, Lazare Saninsky, Nicolas Slonimsky and Aaron Copland.⁹ Due to this impressive network, he was well-informed about international developments, despite the difficulties of finding scores or secondary literature in Buenos Aires during the 1930s and 40s (although the same was true in most of the rest of the world). In 1949 Paz seemed to have completed his book *Arnold Schönberg o el fin de la era tonal* ('Arnold Schoenberg or the End of the Tonal Era'), although the work would not appear for many years.¹⁰ The work demonstrates a good grasp of Schoenberg's work as well as of the relevant dodecaphonic theory of the time, including seminal work by Krenek and René Leibowitz.¹¹ As Fugellie points out, however, Paz had only received many of the scores shortly before, so his knowledge of dodecaphonic composition during the period from 1934 to 1949 was partial at best, at least in the earlier years. As will be seen, he largely lost interest in twelve-note composition shortly thereafter.

Perhaps the most curious aspect of Paz's own twelve-note compositions is that, with one important exception, he only used one series in its prime form and retrograde without transpositions, inversions or retrograde inversions. For anyone schooled in the mature works of the Second Viennese School or most other canonic serial composition, this represents an almost inconceivable limitation. Nor did he primarily use dodecaphony liberally by restricting it to thematic or, more widely, melodic invention. On the contrary, what he valued was the method's strictness, and in most cases, every single note is directly derived from the prime form or its retrograde. In his *Introducción a la música e nuestro tiempo*, which he wrote after his Schoenberg book but which was published before the latter, he argued for 'a strict mental hygiene in music, which strips it of all literary and sentimental tricks and lends it aesthetic autonomy, defined limits and spatial concretion'. These can be found primarily in 'impersonal forms like the suite, the invention, the passacaglia, the canon or the polymelody [?].'¹²

In general, his early dodecaphonic works feature the kind of dense counterpoint and motoric rhythms characteristic of Schoenberg's earliest twelve-note works, such as the Suite for Piano Op. 25

⁷ Fugellie, 152.

⁸ Anton Haefeli, *Die internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik* (Zurich: Atlantis-Verlag, 1982), 493; 495 and 532.

⁹ Fugellie, *Musiker unserer Zeit*, 147.

¹⁰ Fugellie, 282–83; Juan Carlos Paz, *Arnold Schönberg: o, El fin de la era tonal* (Editorial Nueva Visión, 1958).

¹¹ Ernst Krenek, *Studies in Counterpoint: Based on the Twelve-Tone Technique* (G. Schirmer, inc., 1940); René Leibowitz, *Schoenberg et son école: l'étape contemporaine du langage musical* (J.B. Janin, 1947).

¹² Quoted from Fugellie, *Musiker unserer Zeit*, 288.

or indeed the Woodwind Quintet that Paz knew. Although Paz clearly identified with an avant-gardist position both within Argentina and Latin America and in his international alliances, some of his rhetoric is reminiscent of Cocteau's *Rappel à l'ordre*,¹³ just as his music recalls neoclassicism and *Neue Sachlichkeit*, more even than Schoenberg's work from the 1920 and '30s did.

According to Fugellie, the apex of Paz's dodecaphonic phase is formed by *Música* 1946 Op. 45 (1945-47) and *Dédalus*, 1950 Op. 46 (1950-51), which reveal Paz's greater familiarity with the work of Schoenberg and Webern.¹⁴ In these works, Paz particularly employed what he called 'symmetry', which term Fugellie adopts, despite the fact that neither of the fundamental rows is in fact symmetrical as stated, even if Paz's concern for self-similar cells, specifically trichords, and a correspondingly reduced number of interval classes is evident. Paz had by that time performed Webern's Variations for Piano Op. 27 (1936), which provides many examples of both horizontal and vertical (palindromic) symmetry, although its fundamental row itself is not symmetrical (in contradistinction to the palindromic row employed in his Symphony Op. 21, for instance, which Paz may not have known).¹⁵ In *Dédalus*, Paz employed all principal row transformations for the first time. In general, it is a remarkable work, on a completely different scale and level than some of his earlier dodecaphonic efforts and arguably on a par with anything that was composed at the time.¹⁶ It therefore seems ironic that Paz abandoned dodecaphony after the work, at the very moment when he gained mastery of the technique. He did not, however, discard serialism as such, and indeed explored integral serialism through a serial ordering of rhythm and dynamics in addition to pitch in his *Transformaciones canónicas* Op. 49 (1955),¹⁷ but he seems to have regarded this as a new direction.

Paz's influence was not restricted to his compositions, however: it was his tireless activities as an organiser, critic, author and teacher that inspired successive generations of composers in Argentina and beyond. Paradoxically, it may have been the break, in 1936, with his previous institutional base, the Grupo Renovación, that enabled him to find new followers and allies. This conflict seems not to have been caused by aesthetic differences, but by Paz's affair with Sofia Knoll, an Austrian-Jewish immigrant, which caused a scandal in what was (and still is) a predominantly conservative country. What may have been even more significant, however, is that Paz's wife was none other than Eloísa García Castro, the cousin of Juan José and José María Castro, the leading lights of the Grupo and stalwarts of the musical establishment (Juan José was the Director of the Teatro Colón and José María of the Buenos Aires Municipal Band, among many other positions and honours).¹⁸ Left to his own devices, Paz founded the Conciertos de la Nueva Música in 1937, which became the Agrupación Nueva Música in 1944. Under this umbrella, Paz assembled a circle of like-minded composers and musicians, many of them his students. In the early years, the Hungarian emigré Estéban (István) Eitler (1913-60) and the writer and composer Daniel Devoto (1916-2001) were important supporters, succeeded in later periods by Francisco Kröpfl (b. 1931), Mauricio Kagel (1931-2008) and Michael Gielen (1927-2019), who would become one of the leading conductors specialising in new music.

¹³ Jean Cocteau, *Le rappel à l'ordre* (Stock, 1926).

¹⁴ Fugellie, *Musiker unserer Zeit*, 278-89.

¹⁵ Cf. Kathryn Bailey, *The Twelve-Note Music of Anton Webern: Old Forms in a New Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 61-62; 109-12.

¹⁶ A recording of the work can be found at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QF8oI21xniQ>> (accessed 9 April 2020).

¹⁷ Omar Corrado, *Vanguardias al sur: la música de Juan Carlos Paz* (Universidad Nacional de Quilmes Ed., 2012), 195ff.

¹⁸ Fugellie, *Musiker unserer Zeit*, 156-57.

The CNM and ANM performed compositions by their members as well as the international avant-garde, focusing on the Second Viennese School (but not exclusively). The organisation's fortunes varied considerably, but it was always run on a shoestring budget and in semi-formal ways. The same is true of its performance venues, although it saw something of a golden age during a period of left-wing government when it was able to hold concerts in the Teatro del Pueblo, a home for progressive art, culture and politics in the centre of the city: in a letter to Lange, Paz spoke of enthusiastic audiences of at least 550 people during the 1938 season.¹⁹ Only the absence of a piano caused practical difficulties. This period came to an end with the military coup of 1943, which is indicative of the specific problems faced by modernist composers in Latin America.

Throughout this period, Paz and his circle were mostly ignored if not rejected by the largely conservative, nationalist critics. The antagonistic relations with the Grupo Renovación came to a head when Paz attacked the *Sinfonía porteña* (1942) by one of the most promising figures in the nationalist camp, Alberto Ginastera (1916-83), in a review. For many years, the scene would be split between the internationalist, serial avant-garde around Paz and the nationalist, conservative, largely neoclassical movement headed by Ginastera.²⁰

The story of the development of dodecaphony in Brazil in many ways parallels that in neighbouring Argentina, but there are some interesting differences. The leading figure here was Hans-Joachim Koellreutter (1915-2005), a German immigrant who arrived in Brazil, via Switzerland, in 1937. His studies in Berlin coincided with the 'Hindemith affair', as a consequence of which Hindemith took indefinite leave from his teaching position and emigrated soon after.²¹ Koellreutter seems to have only studied with him privately but identified with the 'Berlin School'. Indeed, he is among the signatories of a petition in support of Hindemith.²² Unlike Paz and many immigrants, he established himself fairly quickly, teaching at the Brazilian Conservatory in Rio de Janeiro (from 1937) and the São Paulo Institute of Music (1942-44). In 1939, he set up *Música Viva*, which became a counterpart to the CNM and ANM in Buenos Aires and was closely aligned with it; the mercurial Estéban Eitler played a role in both (as well as in the Chilean Tonus, as we will see). In addition, Koellreutter regularly corresponded with Paz; another important connection was Francisco Curt Lange, a common friend who acted as a nexus and important supporter of composers across Latin America. Although Koellreutter claimed that he had come across the technique in Switzerland, he has always stressed that what drove him to explore dodecaphony was the inquisitiveness of his pupil Cláudio Santoro (1919-89).²³ Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the first dodecaphonic composition in Brazil was composed by Koellreutter, namely his *Inventions for woodwind trio* (1940), followed by the piano piece *Música 1941* (1941) and the *Variations 1941* for String Quartet (1941). Santoro was not far behind: his *Sonatas for Violin and Violin and Piano* are both from 1940, and his *Pequena Toccata* for Piano from 1942.

In contrast to Paz, Koellreutter explored all primary dodecaphonic transformations from the start, but, again unlike Paz, he was never interested in strict adherence and only used the technique as far as he found it useful. The same can be said of his students, with the result that Brazilian twelve-note compositions can often only be identified as such through their composers' declared

¹⁹ Fugellie, 213.

²⁰ Esteban Buch, 'L'avant-garde musicale à Buenos Aires : Paz contra Ginastera', *Circuit: Musiques contemporaines* 17, no. 2 (2007): 11, <https://doi.org/10.7202/016836ar>.

²¹ Elizabeth Janik, *Recomposing German Music: Politics and Musical Tradition in Cold War Berlin* (BRILL, 2005), 71-72.

²² Fugellie, *Musiker unserer Zeit*, 168-69. The letter is reproduced here:

<http://www.angelfire.com/tx2/theorbo/UdK_Universit_tsarchiv__Wortlaut_der_Solidarit_tsadresse_f_r_Paul_Hindemith.htm> (accessed 10 April 2020).

²³ Fugellie, 312.

intention, whereas it can be difficult to recognise serial structures. This difference may be a consequence of Paz and Koellreutter's divergent personalities, but it is also possible that the essentially self-taught Paz was looking to serialism as a guarantor of rigour and order for which Koellreutter, steeped as he was in traditional technique, saw less need.

Under the influence of both nationalist and Marxist ideologies, some of Koellreutter's students, including Santoro, César Guerra-Peixe (1914-93) and Eunice Katunda (Catunda, 1915-91), also explored combinations of serialism with elements of Brazilian traditional and popular music. Not all these experiments were successful – not least in the eyes of their composers who went on to abandon serialism altogether, although Santoro and Katunda were to return to it in the 1960s. Nevertheless, the independence and vitality of Brazilian serialism is striking. Another specificity, in comparison with Argentina and, as we will see, Chile, is the number and prominence of Koellreutter's female students: Katunda is a key figure and her *Hommage à Schoenberg* was the only Latin-American composition included in the ISCM Festival in Brussels (1950); at the very next ISCM Fest (1951, Frankfurt), another composition by one of Koellreutter's students was performed: Nininha Gregori's *Quatro líricas grecas*.²⁴ Fugellie also lists Lavinia Viotti, Sonia Born and Maria Lucia Mazurek among those who accompanied Koellreutter to Darmstadt in 1951 alone.²⁵

Unlike Paz, Koellreutter travelled extensively to Europe between 1948 and 1951, visiting, among others, the first and second dodecaphonic congresses in Milan (1948) and Darmstadt (1951), the ISCM Festival 1949 and the International New Music Courses Darmstadt 1949 and 1951, where he gave a lecture on 'Twelve-tone Music in Brazil'.²⁶ Indeed, during his first journey in 1948, he gave a course on dodecaphony in Milan which was attended by Luigi Nono and Bruno Maderna, among others.²⁷

His international success contrasted with the situation he was confronted with back in Brazil, as is apparent from the epigraph above. His relation to Brazil's compositional establishment in many ways mirrors that of Paz in Argentina. In his early years, he was good friends with most of his colleagues, including Camargo Guarnieri, one of the leading figures in the country's musical life, and, like virtually all his peers a committed nationalist (second only to Heitor Villa-Lobos, who preferred to stay above the fray, however). Whether the relative unity among composers was broken by the factionalism of the avant-garde or whether nationalism had changed from a progressive and modernist position to a reactionary one probably depends on perspective. In 1950, Guarnieri published 'An Open Letter', a vicious attack on Koellreutter (although he remains unnamed) quoted in the epigraph.²⁸ Where the affair surrounding the 'Open Letter' differs from the conflict between the nationalist-conservative and serialist-progressive factions elsewhere, as exemplified by the Ginastera affair in Argentina, is that Guarnieri's 'Open Letter' can be understood both from a reactionary, nationalist and a Zhdanovite Communist position and was accordingly embraced by both the right and the extreme left.²⁹ The prevalence of the latter and influence of the Partido Comunista Brasileiro (PCB) is a peculiarity of the Brazilian situation. Among Koellreutter's students,

²⁴ Haefeli, *Die internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik*, 505–6; Fugellie, *Musiker unserer Zeit*, 358; 396.

²⁵ Fugellie, *Musiker unserer Zeit*, 358.

²⁶ Fugellie, 342–64.

²⁷ Fugellie, 348.

²⁸ Fugellie, 318. There are additional potential private reasons for the conflict between Guarnieri and Koellreutter. I would like to thank Daniela Fugellie, Fernando Magre, Joevan de Mattos, Rodolfo Coelho de Souza and Bernardo Barros for their thoughts and information on the matter.

²⁹ André Egg, 'A Carta Aberta de Camargo Guarnieri', *Revista Científica/FAP* 1 (2006), <http://periodicos.unespar.edu.br/index.php/revistacientifica/article/view/1735>; Flavio Silva, 'Camargo Guarnieri e Mario de Andrade', *Latin American Music Review / Revista de Música Latinoamericana* 20, no. 2 (1999): 184, <https://doi.org/10.2307/780020>.

Santoro and Katunda were members of the PCB and both visited the Second International Congress of Composers and Music Critics 1948 in Prague, where the Zhdanov doctrine of socialist realism was proclaimed.³⁰ Santoro adopted the party line wholesale, denounced his teacher and supported Guarnieri's letter. Katunda, who was in close correspondence with Nono at the time,³¹ was more ambivalent, but she too toed the line in support of Guarnieri – although she apologised publicly to Koellreutter in 1979. Others, notably his student Edino Krieger, continued to support Koellreutter publicly.³²

Meanwhile, dodecaphony also took hold in Chile, where the organisation Tonus was set up largely on the model of the ANM and was active from 1947 to 1959. One of the links to Buenos Aires was none other than Estéban Eitler, Paz's student, who moved between Chile, Argentina and Brazil, but whose centre of activities for many years was Santiago de Chile. Eitler is a particularly fascinating figure who seems to epitomise the immigrant experience: he was fascinated by the traditional music of the Quechua and Paraná, adopted impressionism, postimpressionism, pentatonicism, neoclassicism and dodecaphony in short order and, among many other activities as composer and flautist in virtually all spheres of musical life, was the leader of a popular dance band called Don Esteban y sus Trotamundos.³³ But the leading figure in Tonus was the Dutch immigrant Fré Focke (1910-89). Focke was a student of Willem Pijper, the leading Dutch composer of his generation, and, uniquely among Latin-America-based composers, Anton Webern, if apparently only for a brief period in the 1940s. What singles him out from the many other European, often Jewish immigrants that played important roles in the musical life of Latin America, is that, apparently unbeknownst to the generally left-leaning avant-garde and his fellow immigrants, he came 'from the other side'. Although there is no evidence that Focke was an active Nazi, his European career took place largely in Germany and German-occupied Vienna. The chief reason for this was the operatic career of his wife, the contralto Ria Focke, who went to Germany in 1936 and who, among other activities, performed Erda at the Bayreuth Festival from 1939.³⁴ After the war, the Fockes briefly returned to the Netherlands, where they would have been less than welcome, before moving to Sweden, where the Chilean pianist Claudio Arrau suggested they move to Chile, which they did in 1947.³⁵ Like Koellreutter in Brazil, Focke was able to establish himself relatively quickly, and Tonus generally had a less antagonistic relationship to the country's musical establishment than its Argentine and Brazilian counterparts.

As already mentioned, serialism seems to have developed in the North of the subcontinent independently of the South, and it tended to arrive not directly from Europe but from the USA. Pride of place has to go to the Black Panamanian composer Roque Cordero (1917-2008). Cordero won a scholarship to the University of Minnesota in 1943, attracting the attention first of Dimitris Mitropoulos and then Ernst Krenek, with whom he studied before returning to Panama and becoming a leading figure in its musical life. In addition, he continued to have a distinguished parallel career in the USA.³⁶ As a student of Krenek, he embraced dodecaphony from the 1940s. Cordero left his mark on the musical lives of neighbouring countries notably at the regular Festival de Música in Caracas, which, starting in 1954, represented an ambitious attempt at putting Venezuela on the

³⁰ Mark Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 37–49.

³¹ Fugellie, *Musiker unserer Zeit*, 394–95.

³² Fugellie, 401.

³³ Fugellie, 178–94.

³⁴ Fugellie, 194–98; Karl-Josef Kutsch and Leo Riemens, *Großes Sängerlexikon* (Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 1500.

³⁵ Fugellie, *Musiker unserer Zeit*, 198.

³⁶ Stephanie Stallings, 'Cordero, Roque', in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2015), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-1002282442> (accessed 13 April 2020).

musical map. According to Miguel Astor, the Festival was marked by the ‘conflict between nationalism and modernism’.³⁷ In Manuel Laufer’s account, while the supremacy of nationalism wasn’t openly questioned at the first Festival in 1954, the conflict broke out into the open at its second iteration in 1957, which featured, among other things, a talk by René Leibowitz. During the Festival, Cordero emerged as ‘the most militant defender of twelve-tone technique’ with an article entitled ‘Nationalism versus Docecaphonism?’. In it he responded to a question posed by the critic Edgardo Martín, who, in a review of Cordero’s Second Symphony, had asked: ‘to what extent is it logical, convenient, and healthy (artistically speaking) for composers from America to compose in this [dodecaphonic] manner?’ Cordero retorted that ‘that question is unnecessary. Must it be considered illogical for a man of today to express himself in the language of his times?’. He went on to critique the dichotomy between the two concepts: ‘nationalism and dodecaphonism are two different things, but they are not antagonistic’, thereby criticising what he saw as a conflation between technical means and aesthetic principles.³⁸ Although Cordero was a strict serial composer,³⁹ there is certainly nothing cerebral or esoteric in his compositions, even if explicitly nationalist elements are harder to detect.

One prominent ally was the great Cuban writer and musicologist Alejo Carpentier, then exiled in Venezuela. Although temperamentally more drawn to neoclassical idioms, he argued that there is no reason to reject new techniques:

Now, in many Latin American countries, there is an unwarranted suspicion of twelve-tone techniques. It has been claimed that such acquisitions are contrary to the spirit of what “should” (?) be our music. [...]. Thus it may seem as if by studying a system that is part of the conquests of the contemporary artist one is abjuring something, when that is not the case.⁴⁰

It is in this climate that Venezuelan composers, such as Alejandro Planchart (1935-2019, better known as a musicologist) and Rhazés Hernández López (1918-91), experimented with dodecaphony. Other important figures at the Caracas Festival were Rodolfo Halffter (1900-1987), the first Mexican composer to adopt dodecaphony with his *Tres hojas de album* for Piano (1953), and Ginastera, who, by that time, had left his early ‘objective nationalism’ behind. Even more conservative composers, such as the Peruvian Enrique Iturriaga (1918-2019), another stalwart of the Caracas Festival, have been drawn to serialism at times, as in his *Vivencias I–IV* (1965).⁴¹

Thus, in the course of the 1960s, serialism could no longer be considered a ‘counter-current’ to the mainstream of ‘folkloristic nationalism’ as Béhague would have it. In many, but by no means all, cases, old hostilities crumbled. In 1958, Ginastera composed his Second String Quartet, his first fully dodecaphonic work. This was no sudden volte-face, but the result of a long process.⁴² Nor was

³⁷ Miguel Astor, ‘Los Ojos de Sojo: El Conflicto Entre Nacionalismo y Modernidad En Los Festivales de Música de Caracas (1954-1966)’ (PhD, Caracas, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 2008).

³⁸ Manuel Laufer, ‘Reinscribing Modernism: Selected Episodes in Venezuelan Composition after 1950’ (PhD, New York, New York University, 2015), 61–63. The ‘offending’ composition can be found at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGUewyhHMg8>> (accessed 12 April 2020).

³⁹ Jeremy Orosz, ‘The Twelve-Tone Music of Roque Cordero’, *Latin American Music Review* 39, no. 2 (2018): 137–59.

⁴⁰ Quoted from Astor, ‘Los Ojos de Sojo: El Conflicto Entre Nacionalismo y Modernidad En Los Festivales de Música de Caracas (1954-1966)’, 70–71, my translation.

⁴¹ J. Carlos Estenssoro, ‘Iturriaga, Enrique’, in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000013988> (accessed 13 April 2020).

⁴² Malena Kuss, ‘Ginastera (1916–1983): La Trayectoria de un Método’, *Revista Argentina de Musicología* 14 (2013): 15–52.

he alone: many composers from the nationalist or conservative camp experimented with the method at the time; even Guarnieri tasted the fruits of the 'wild fig tree of cosmopolitanism' in his Fifth Piano Concerto (1970).⁴³

Of particular significance for Latin-American music was the founding in 1962 of CLAEM (Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales) under the auspices of the Instituto di Tella in Buenos Aires. Ginastera became the Director, and he showed little trace of his earlier nationalist, conservative affiliation. The Centre hosted leading international lights such as Luigi Dallapiccola, Luigi Nono, Iannis Xenakis and Aaron Copland, but it had an even greater impact in bringing together and energizing the Latin-American avant-garde. In 1967, Ginastera even installed Kröpfl, the then Director of the Agrupación Nueva Música, his former nemesis, to direct the CLAEM's electronic studio, succeeding the Peruvian composer César Bolaños. Unfortunately, the Centre was forced to close in 1970 due to the increasing political instability during the 'Argentine Revolution', but the number of composers from all across the subcontinent that it profoundly shaped during its short life is legion.

The influence of integral serialism is more difficult to trace than that of dodecaphony. We have seen that Paz explored it in 1955, and it is certainly a reference point for later generations of composers, notably those associated with Karlheinz Stockhausen, such as the Peruvian Mesías Maiguashca (b. 1938), a CLAEM graduate and Stockhausen's assistant from 1968 to '72, or the Mexican Julio Estrada (b. 1943), his student in 1968-69. More often than not, however, the specificities of the technique are submerged in combinations with, variously, aleatory technique, music theatre, (live) electronics, experimentalism, microtonality or spectralism, to form a generalised avant-gardism. In many cases, these techniques and principles were introduced in quick succession if not at the same time (the same can be said about dodecaphony in some instances), so that careful distinctions are often difficult to undertake.

⁴³ Gerard Béhague, 'Guarnieri, (Mozart) Camargo', in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000011904> (accessed 13 April 2020).