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## Three Violin Sonatas by Twentieth Century Mexican Composers: an Alternative to the Standard Violin Literature with Pedagogical Application

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT BROWNSVILLE

To the Graduate Faculty:

I hereby recommend that this Project prepared under my direction by Martha Placeres entitled "Three Violin Sonatas by Twentieth Century Mexican Composers: an Alternative to the Standard Violin Literature with Pedagogical Application", be accepted as fulfilling the thesis requirement of the degree Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies.

*Steve Zimm* 4-7-05  
Project Director Date

After inspection and defense of the final copy of the Project Paper by the candidate, the following members of the Final Examination Committee concur in its approval and recommend its acceptance:

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT BROWNSVILLE

Project Approval

THREE VIOLIN SONATAS BY  
TWENTIETH CENTURY MEXICAN COMPOSERS:  
AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE STANDARD VIOLIN LITERATURE  
WITH PEDAGOGICAL APPLICATION

A Research Proposal Presented to the  
Graduate Faculty of the  
Department of Music

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies

by

Martha Placeres

April 2005

Approved by Project Committee:

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Dean of Graduate Studies

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### Abstract

The project "Three Violin Sonatas by Twentieth Century Mexican Composers: an Alternative to the Standard Violin Literature with Pedagogical Application" has as its objectives to introduce violin music by Mexican composers to the community of the Rio Grande Valley, to demonstrate how these works can become part of the standard violin repertoire, and to develop pedagogical strategies for teaching these pieces.

To start this project, it was necessary to choose and incorporate the following composers: Manuel María Ponce Cuellar because he is the most known and prolific composer in Mexico and also well-known around the world; Blas Galindo Dimas because he contributed enormously to the Mexican Nationalism; and finally, Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras because he is a composer from Puebla, musically one of the most important states in Mexico, and also because he has a very distinctive style of writing. Even though these three composers have a very different style of writing and approach, they each exhibit elements of Mexican Nationalism in their musical compositions.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

Hispanic heritage in the state of Texas is very strong, especially in the Rio Grande Valley. This heritage includes language, food, literature, customs, and, fine arts.

The primary objective of this project is to present and introduce Mexican violin music written in the twentieth century to the standard violin literature. An additional objective is to relate the musical compositions to the areas of education and Spanish. It is important to mention that this music is not played often in Mexico; unfortunately, Mexican music is not promoted and played as it should be. Most music schools focus on European composers of the Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Modern periods. Also, Mexican compositions are not published regularly and this makes it difficult to obtain the music.

Composers and sonatas included in this research are: Manuel María Ponce, Sonata Breve; Blas Galindo Dimas, Sonata; and Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras, Sonata Simple. These composers were chosen because of their contributions to promotion of Mexican Nationalism, and their unique styles of writing. These sonatas are representative examples of their violin music. The differences between these works will help to demonstrate the variety and richness of Mexican music.

Manuel María Ponce Cuellar (1882-1948) is the most well-known and prolific composer of Mexico. Thanks to his contributions to the study and promotion of Mexican music, he is considered the “Father of Mexican Nationalism.” Included in this effort to encourage Mexican Nationalism, is the well-known song called “Estrellita” (My Little Star), which has been played around the world and is part of the standard violin repertoire. The most famous transcription of this piece for violin and piano was made by the famous violinist Jascha Heifetz (1900-1987) in the 1920’s.

Blas Galindo Dimas (1910-1993) is an important example of a Mexican nationalist composer trying to rescue the use of Indian tunes and folk music. Galindo



was influenced by Ponce when he studied composition with Carlos Chávez, in the early 1930's: Chávez and Galindo applied Ponce's nationalistic style and ideas into their compositions. After studying with Chávez, Galindo developed his own style, gaining acceptance and recognition by the Mexican public. Galindo's work was an essential component in the development of Mexican Nationalism.

Finally, Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras (b.1927) is originally from the State of Puebla. He studied with Galindo and therefore was influenced by Mexican Nationalism. During the 1950's, Mexican Nationalism was culminating, and a new generation of composers was trying out new styles. Gutiérrez started to experiment by incorporating simple Renaissance counterpoint with melodies based on medieval modes.

To obtain music and information about the composers, it was necessary to travel to Mexico. The author took this trip in May 2004. Information and material were obtained from the Puebla State Conservatory of Music Library, National Conservatory of Music Library, and the Aguirre family library, to whom the writer is related.

The main objectives of this project are: to relate the areas of Music, Education and Spanish; to provide a brief analysis of each of the selected works and their pedagogical applications; to present a biography on each composer in order to show how they contributed to Mexican music; and to introduce and perform Mexican music that is not yet part of the standard violin repertoire.

## Chapter 2

### BIOGRAPHIES OF COMPOSERS

This chapter will present a brief biography on each composer and his contributions to Mexican music. To compare the composers, it is important to trace their histories and to determine the influences that developed their different musical approaches.

The first composer is Manuel María Ponce Cuellar who was born in Fresnillo, Zacatecas, in 1882. His family moved to the city of Aguascalientes and he lived there until he was 15 years old. He was famous as a child prodigy in Music, and in 1901 Ponce entered the National Conservatory of Music with a prestigious reputation as a pianist and composer. From 1904 to 1908, Ponce traveled to Europe to study in Bologna, Italy with Luigi Torchi (1858-1920) and Dall'Olio; and Germany at the Berlin Conservatory of Music with Martin Krause. In 1908 he returned to Mexico to become a piano and music history teacher at the National Conservatory of Music. In 1912, Ponce composed his famous work “Estrellita.”

Javier González, in an article for the classical-composers web site, wrote:

That same year [1912] Ponce gave in the “Arbeau Theater” the memorable concert of Mexican Popular Music that came to constitute a fundamental landmark in the history of the national song. With this valuable activity of promotion of the music of the country and with melodies like “Estrellita”, “Al Borde del Palmar”, “Alevántate”, “La Pajarera”, “Marchita el Alma”, and “Una Multitud Más”, Ponce gained the honorable title of “Creator of the Modern Mexican Song.” He was also the first Mexican composer of popular music that projected his music to the foreigner. “Estrellita”, for example, has been part of the repertoire of the main orchestras of the world....”

Ponce moved to Paris in the 1920's and after studying with the French composer Paul Dukas (1865-1935), Ponce abandoned the genteel salon-music style then prevalent in Mexico, and began applying an impressionistic idiom to works with concise structures and skilled counterpoint. Later on, he developed a nationalistic style in which he expressed his Mexican origins. Ponce was a very close friend of guitarist Andres Segovia (1893-1987), for whom he wrote almost all of his guitar music. His guitar works in this style became standards in the modern guitar repertoire.

David López wrote in his book Manuel M. Ponce:

Two months before his death, Ponce received the “National Arts and Science Prize” granted by the President Miguel Alemán on February 26<sup>th</sup> of 1948. (126-127)

This prize is conferred every year by the Federal Education Organization of Mexico to Mexican citizens who contribute to the enrichment of the Mexican culture and progress in the areas of Science, Technology, Arts or Philosophy.

The second composer is the prodigious musician Blas Galindo Dimas who was born in San Gabriel, Jalisco in 1910. He initiated his musical studies at a very young age performing in the children's choir at his church. In 1931, Galindo traveled to Mexico City to enroll in the National Conservatory of Music. He was under the tutelage of teachers such as José Rolón (1883-1945), Candelario Huízar (1883-1970), Manuel Rodríguez Vizcarra, and Carlos Chávez (1899-1978). In 1933, Galindo composed the Suite for Violin and Violoncello which was premiered in the Hidalgo Theater in Mexico City. Galindo left the capital to teach music courses in the Rural Normal School of Mexe, in the State of Hidalgo. In 1935, he returned to Mexico City and formed the “Group of the Four” with José Pablo Moncayo (1912-1958), Salvador Contreras (1912-1982), and Daniel Ayala (1906-1975). The group organized recitals to perform their own compositions. Galindo composed his famous work, Sones de Mariachi, for small orchestra and mariachi, which has been performed by orchestras around the world. The main melodies of this composition are the well-known Mexican songs: “La Negra”, “El Zopilote Mojado”, and “Los Cuatro Reales.” This symphonic work was premiered in

May 1940 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York with Carlos Chávez conducting the orchestra.

In La Vida Musical en Guadalajara, Amelia García wrote about Galindo's professional achievements:

In 1941, Galindo attended the Musical Festival of Berkshire, Massachusetts, in the United States, and received a scholarship from the Rockefeller Foundation to study in the city of Lenox. There he met Aaron Copland, from whom he received lessons during some months. He returned to Mexico in 1942, and was hired by The National Conservatory of Music as a Lecturer. Later on he received the title of Composition Professor with the highest qualifications, and in 1945 he replaced Jose Rolón as teacher of music theory and composition classes. Finally in 1947, he became Dean of the National Conservatory of Music and held this position until 1961. (134)

The prestigious American composer Aaron Copland (1900-1990) was also an influence on Galindo when he studied in the United States. As Ponce did for Mexican music, Copland was one of the first composers to create and promote American music by incorporating the use of folk songs. He was one of the founders of American nationalism in music.

Galindo received several prizes and tributes such as the "Jose Angel Flames" prize at the Second Latin American Festival of Caracas, Venezuela in 1957, first prize in the composition competition held by the State of Jalisco in 1958, "Galardón Ocho Columnas" in 1983, and "Inter-American Prize of Culture" promoted by the Organization of American States (O.A.S.) in 1992. Galindo died in Mexico City in 1993.

Originally from Tehuacán, Puebla, Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras was born in 1927. He studied architecture in the National University of Mexico. His love for music led him to study in the National Conservatory of Music in Mexico City. He received a scholarship to study composition, musical analysis and counterpoint in the Paris Conservatory of Music, and also in the prestigious Juilliard Music School in New York City.

Gutiérrez has won numerous awards throughout the world for his chamber, orchestral, choral, ballet, and film music. He was a recipient of a Doctorate Honoris Causa from the National University of Mexico.

Gutiérrez states in his testimonial for the arts-history electronic magazine:

I decided to dedicate my life to the music because I would rather fail in it than have success in another profession.

These three composers are internationally recognized and share the influence of Mexican Nationalism. Ponce and Galindo composed in a nationalistic style but with different approaches. Ponce had different stylistic periods of writing, but in his nationalistic period he based his compositions on popular Mexican songs. The Sonata Breve, to be analyzed in this paper, was composed during his third style period, in which he was influenced by French Musical Impressionism and started to incorporate this new language into his music. Galindo also promoted Mexican identity in music by basing his compositions on the folk tunes from indigenous tribes of Mexico. In comparison, Gutiérrez is not purely nationalistic because he does not use any folk tunes in his music, but he does promote a Mexican identity by experimenting and mixing Renaissance counterpoint with melodies based on modes, melodies based on syncopation and use of non-functional harmony.

## Chapter 3

### ANALYSES OF WORKS

In this section, the three sonatas will be analyzed in order to determine how they are constructed, to distinguish the writing style of each composer, and to demonstrate how they contribute to Mexican music. The analyses appear in chronological order: first Manuel M. Ponce, second Blas Galindo, and third Joaquín Gutiérrez.

The Sonata Breve for violin and piano in E Major composed in 1932 by Manuel M. Ponce, reflects the third stage of his writing style. Due to his stay in Paris and his musical studies with Paul Dukas, he was influenced by French Musical Impressionism, combining this technique with his own style of writing.

Eric Cahue wrote in his program notes for the recording Herencia Musical Impresionista:

My judgment of Ponce's Sonata for violin and piano is that [it] is swift and fresh, but the work not only includes these characteristics, but I will add purity and beauty as well...."

In this sonata Ponce follows the standard formal structures such as sonata form. The first movement (Allegretto mosso) in E Major, is organized in sonata form. It has an Impressionistic style with an elaborate dialogue between the violin and piano, as seen in Fig. 1-11.



The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Manuel M. Ponce's Sonata Breve. The score is for Violin and Piano. The title above the staff is "Ponce, Sonata Breve 1st. Mov. 2 before repeat 2". The Violin part is on the top staff, and the Piano part is on the bottom staff. The music is in E Major and 2/4 time. The score shows measures 24 through 28. The Violin part features a melodic line with grace notes and slurs. The Piano part provides harmonic support with chords and arpeggiated figures. Dynamics markings like 'f' (forte) are present.

Fig. 1-11. Manuel M. Ponce, Sonata Breve, first movement, measure 24-28.

The imitation of themes between instruments is clearly defined (see Fig. 1-12 and 1-13), as well as the use of parallelism, as seen in Fig. 1-14.



Fig. 1-12. Manuel M. Ponce, Sonata Breve, first movement, measure 42-43.



Fig. 1-13. Manuel M. Ponce, Sonata Breve, first movement, measure 130-131.



Fig. 1-14. Manuel M. Ponce, Sonata Breve, first movement, measure 60-61.

The second movement (Adagio), in a minor, the subdominant key to E Major reflects Ponce's French spirit. This movement is short and has components from Impressionism, such as use of chords in which the triad is missing, syncopation, and melodic lines built on dissonant intervals, as seen in Fig. 1-21.



Fig. 1-21. Manuel M. Ponce, Sonata Breve, second movement, opening.

Ponce uses 9<sup>th</sup> chords that are unprepared and unresolved (See Fig 1-22). This is also a characteristic of Musical Impressionism.



Fig. 1-22. Manuel M. Ponce, Sonata Breve, second movement, measure 12-13.

The third movement (Allegro alla spagnola), in e minor, the parallel minor to E Major, presents a contrast to the other movements due to its Spanish dance rhythm and tunes. This movement is based on a Spanish folk song called “Anda jaleo, jaleo.” Compare Fig. 1-31 with 1-32.



Fig. 1-31. Spanish folk song, Anda jaleo jaleo, main tune.





Fig. 1-32. Manuel M. Ponce, Sonata Breve, third movement, measure 47-50.

This is a movement that maintains a constant level of violinistic sonority and brilliance, and a complex dialogue between the violin and piano (See Fig. 1-33 and 1-34). Both instruments never stop playing, which makes this movement a perpetual motion work.

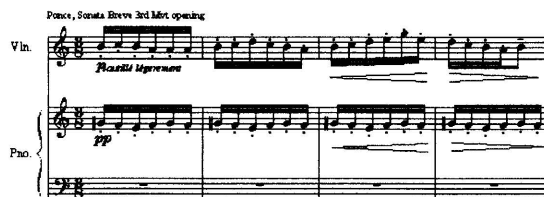


Fig. 1-33. Manuel M. Ponce, Sonata Breve, third movement, opening.



Fig. 1-34. Manuel M. Ponce, Sonata Breve, third movement, measure 73-81.

The Sonata for violin and piano by Blas Galindo was composed in 1945; it reflects Mexican Nationalism in that the use of Indian tunes and rhythms are the main elements of writing.

The first movement (Allegro) in C Major, is a virtuosic piece in which the primary characteristic is the combination of hemiolas, simple, compound, and asymmetric time signatures. The violin and piano have linear melodies that are repeated several times throughout the piece (compare Fig. 2-11 and 2-12). Also, the use of imitation of themes is a characteristic of this movement. See Fig. 2-13.

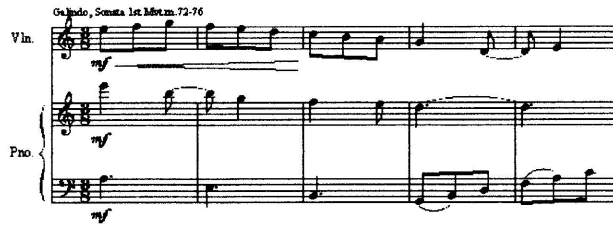


Fig. 2-11, Blas Galindo, Sonata for Violin and Piano, first movement, m.72-76.



Fig. 2-12, Blas Galindo, Sonata for Violin and Piano, first movement, m.91-95.



Fig. 2-13. Blas Galindo, Sonata for Violin and Piano, first movement, measure 31-42.

The dialogue between the piano and the violin has a constant rhythms of two against three (see Fig. 2-14); this polymeter is a main characteristic of this Sonata. The composer gives the sense of playing two different works in one, not only using different

rhythms for the violin and piano but also by overlapping two contrapuntal melodies. See Fig. 2-15.

Galindo, Sonata 1st Mvt. 4 before square 6



Fig. -2-14. Blas Galindo, Sonata for Violin and Piano, first movement, measure 87-90.

Galindo, Sonata 1st Mvt. square 10



Fig. 2-15. Blas Galindo, Sonata for Violin and Piano, first movement, measure 153-159.

The second movement (Largo) is in G Major, the dominant to C Major. It is in ternary form (ABA), with the middle section at a faster tempo. The harmonic structure is based on open chords using fourths and fifths in the piano while the melodic line played by the violin makes use of intervals of fourths, sevenths and octaves, as seen in Fig. 2-21. This is a lyrical movement with attractive melodies.

Galindo, Sonata 2nd Mvt. opening

*Ad lib. espressivo*



Fig. 2-21. Blas Galindo, Sonata for Violin and Piano, second movement, opening.

The B section is recognized by a tempo and key change. The B theme, on the violin part, has a motivic connection with the A theme (compare Fig. 2-21 with 2-22). In this movement, open chords are also used with some syncopation and parallelism, as seen in Fig. 2-22.

Galindo, Sonata 2nd Mvt. 1-4 after square 6

Fig. 2-22. Blas Galindo, Sonata for Violin and Piano, second movement, measure 62-65.

Towards the end (A section), a harmonic shift back takes place in order to restate the original thematic material. See Fig. 2-23

Fig. 2-23. Blas Galindo, Sonata for Violin and Piano, second movement, measure 89-92.

The third movement (Molto Allegro), returns to the tonic key of C Major. It has a ABCBA form different to the standard rondo form constructed as follows: ABACA. Also, it has a rhythmic ostinato placed in dialogue between the two instruments, as seen in Fig. 2-31.



Fig. 2-31. Blas Galindo, Sonata for Violin and Piano, third movement, measure 3-6.

The B section has a more lyrical section that uses longer rhythmic values, giving the impression of a tempo change (see Fig. 2-32).



Fig. 2-32. Blas Galindo, Sonata for Violin and Piano, third movement, measure 76-79.

The third section of the final movement uses thematic material from the first movement; hence, making this composition a quasi-cyclical form. However, this time the melody is written in D Major and in quadruple meter. Compare Fig. 2-33 with 2-34.



Fig. 2-33. Blas Galindo, Sonata for Violin and Piano, first movement, measure 195-198.

Galindo, Sonata 3rd Mvt. square 7

Vln.

Pno.

*sempre in tempo*

*cantabile e molto legato*

Fig. 2-34. Blas Galindo, Sonata for Violin and Piano, third movement, measure 123-126.

The final section closes bringing back the ostinato from the beginning of the movement, as seen in Fig. 2-35.

Galindo, Sonata 3rd Mvt. square 10

Vln.

Pno.

Fig. 2-35. Blas Galindo, Sonata for Violin and Piano, third movement, measure 173-176.

The last work is Sonata Simple for flute (or violin) and piano by Joaquín Gutiérrez composed in 1965. This sonata contains simple melodies accompanied by counterpoint in the piano part.

The first movement (*Allegro non troppo*), for which no key signature is given, has a sonata form structure. Melodies and accompaniment change throughout the movement using accidentals to give different tonal centers. Gutiérrez uses a dorian mode with the note D as a tonal center. See Fig. 3-11.

Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple 1st Mvt. opening

Allegro non troppo

Violin

*la gato a cantabile*

Piano

*mf*

Fig. 3-11. Joaquín Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple, first movement, opening section.

Although Gutiérrez uses some syncopation and meter changes in this movement, but this is not an essential component of his writing style (see Fig. 3-12 and 3-13).

Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple 1st Mvt. measure 80-82

Vln.

Pno.

Fig. 3-12. Joaquín Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple, first movement, measure 80-82.

Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple 1st Mvt. m. 94-98

*sempre semplice e senza rall.*

Vln.

*mf*

Pno.

*mf*

Fig. 3-13. Joaquín Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple, first movement, closing section.

The second movement (Andante) in ternary form, introduces a syncopated harmony of thirds in each hand of the piano part, supporting a melodic line played by the violin (See Fig. 3-21). The melodic line played by the violin contains as a tonal center the note G.

Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple 2nd Mvt. opening

Vln. *mf*

Pno. *Legato* *mf*

Fig.3-21. Joaquín Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple, second movement, opening section.

In the B section, the right hand of the piano plays a different accompaniment based on arpeggios to support the melody in the violin part. See Fig. 3-22.

Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple 2nd Mvt. m. 17-20

Vln. *Tempo primo*

Pno.

Fig. 3-22. Joaquín Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple, second movement, measure 17-20.

Some measures later, the left hand of the piano joins in playing only one note and after some measures using intervals of thirds, as seen in Fig. 3-23. In Fig. 3-24, the piano has the same melodic line played by the violin at the beginning of the movement (as shown in Fig. 3-21), but this time having as a tonal center the note C.

Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple 2nd Mvt. m. 29-32

Vln. *f*

Pno. *f*

Fig. 3-23. Joaquín Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple, second movement, measure 29-32.



Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple 2nd Mvt. m. 36-39

Vln.

Pno.

*cantabile*

Fig. 3-24. Joaquín Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple, second movement, measure 36-39.

This movement ends in C Major, although it did not start in this key or with this tonal center. See Fig. 3-25.

Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple 2nd Mvt. m. 49-51

Vln.

Pno.

*Lento*

*pp*

Fig. 3-25. Joaquín Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple, second movement, closing section.

The third movement (Allegro) is structured in sonata form for which no key signature is given. The opening melody played by the violin is based on a pentatonic series of notes (D, E, G, A and C), as shown in Fig. 3-31.

Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple 3rd Mvt. opening

Vln.

Pno.

*mf*

Fig. 3-31. Joaquín Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple, third movement, opening.

Later on, a tonal center is given with a melody in the right hand of the piano emphasizing the note E; the left hand of the piano plays fully diminished seventh chords. In comparison with the piano, the melodic line played by the violin emphasizes on the note E flat; therefore in this example, the composer makes use of bitonality, or two different tonal centers. See Fig. 3-32.

Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple 3rd Mvmt. 41-43

Fig. 3-32. Joaquín Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple, third movement, measure 41-43.

In the middle of this movement, the music becomes highly chromatic. In this particular case, the note E is emphasized by the left hand of the piano (sense of tonal center) while the violin starts passing from an E flat, that enharmonically can be used as D sharp or leading tone, towards an E. Finally both instruments join the same tonal center. See Fig. 3-33.

Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple 3rd Mvmt. 50-54

Fig. 3-33. Joaquín Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple, third movement, measure 50-54.

At the end of the movement, the piano plays poly chords (polytonality) to accompany the melodic line played by the violin, see Fig. 3-33. This melodic line is the same used at the beginning of the movement.

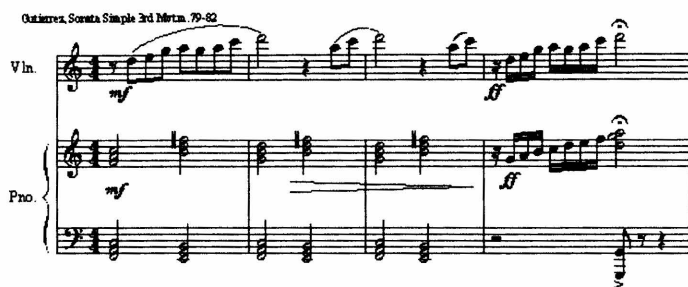


Fig. 3-33. Joaquín Gutiérrez, Sonata Simple, third movement, closing section.

In La Música de México Periodo Contemporáneo, Gloria Carmona writes about Sonata Simple:

Composed in 1965, this piece reflects Gutierrez's "voluntary simplicity" and "atonal" technique. It is important to mention that this simplicity is not often used in the Mexican music after 1950. (120)

Perhaps Gloria Carmona is exaggerating the term "atonal" in her statement. It is true that this work does not use the traditional functional harmony seen in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but this does not mean that it is atonal. To be atonal music it must have no sense at all of tonality, but this work does indeed have a sense of tonality.

As discussed before, the first movement has the note D as a tonal center at the beginning of it; this movement changes continuously this sense of tonality. In the second movement, the tonal center starts on the note G and ends on the note C. Finally, the third movement has mainly as a tonal center the note E; therefore this composition can not be considered atonal.

In comparing these sonatas by Ponce, Galindo, and Gutiérrez, we can say that their writing styles and approaches are completely different.

Ponce applied characteristics of French Impressionism in his Sonata Breve. Definitely, this was result of his studies in Paris and the influence of Paul Dukas. In this new period, he abandoned his salon style to give life to new compositions that are also part of the Nationalism, although these compositions are not part of the popular song genre anymore.

Galindo used folk tunes as a main element in his compositions. Melodies were built on intervals of fourths and sevenths, and rhythmic complexities were essential components in his writing style. These characteristics are not only found in his chamber music, but also in his symphonic works.

Gutiérrez' writing style has a "voluntary simplicity" in which he tries to experiment with simple counterpoint supporting melodies based on medieval modes, with the use of bitonality or tonal ambiguity. His textures are similar to Renaissance counterpoint, but his melodies have fresh and surprising components that make his music totally new to the Mexican audience. This has been an essential part of his success as a composer.

## Chapter 4

### PEDAGOGICAL APPLICATION

This chapter will focus on the pedagogical tools that one can use to be successful playing these works. These practical applications should be isolated and practiced before trying to play each movement for the first time. Specific exercises will be given for each of the movements of the three sonatas. These exercises will target different passages that are either very important or extremely challenging for the violin player.

These sonatas require different levels of technical proficiency, which make them a useful repertoire option for the developing violin player. A teacher can decide the appropriate piece for the student according to the student abilities. As a prerequisite, the student must be intermediate or advanced level with the ability to shift to the high positions without any problem, play fast passages, and have complete control of bowing strokes.

The Sonata Breve by Manuel M. Ponce is extremely challenging for both the violinist and pianist. The student should be playing at an advanced level, ideally having had at least five or six years of continuous study.

To play the first movement, the student must work on specific scales to play certain passages (See Ex. 1-11), using various bow strokes such as slurred staccato (short notes bowed to the same direction) and spiccato (separated short notes). Besides this, exercises with double stops will be required in order to play the passages that include them.



Ex. 1-11. E Major scale.

To play the passage beginning in measure 25, students must practice an A Lydian scale to set their fingers for accurate intonation. See Ex. 1-12



Ex. 1-12

Measure 25-28.

The passage beginning in measure 113 is the same as in measure 25, but in a different key, as seen in Ex. 1-13. Practicing an A Major scale will help in playing this part in tune and in shifting properly.



Ex. 1-13

Measure 113-116.

The last part of this movement requires the performer to shift quickly into a high position. To accomplish this, it is necessary to practice a B Major scale using long rhythmic values and following the fingerings given in Ex. 1-14. After this is accomplished, the student will play this passage as indicated.



Ex. 1-14

Measure 149-153.

One of the most difficult problems for the violin player is to play double-stops (playing two notes at a time). This requires the student to apply more pressure to the bow and to play both notes in tune. Slow practice isolating the double-stop passages will help with success, as seen in Ex. 1-15. The student should first practice the lower notes, then the upper notes, and finally play them together.



Ex. 1-15

Measure 35-37

The passage is repeated towards the end of the movement in a different key (measure 123-125); the same exercise will help the student to play the double-stops in tune. See Ex. 1-16.



Ex. 1-16

Measure 123-125.

The second movement requires extreme control while shifting into higher positions (See Ex. 1-21). Also, this movement uses uncommon intervals played by the violin player; the performer will need to target specific passages in which extensive shifting is required, as seen in Ex. 1-22.



Ex. 1-21

Measure 3.



Ex. 1-22

Measure 11-12.

To be successful with these large leaps, it is important to practice very slowly while trying to hear the landing note before it is played and to change the rhythmic values to master the shifts (See Ex. 1-23). As soon as the shifts are completely mastered, the student can add the actual rhythm values with the bowings.



Ex. 1-23



Measure 13.

The third movement has Spanish dance-like tunes with accented notes on the off beats in the piano part, while the violin plays a moving melody line in 6/8 and vice versa. This requires extreme control of the rhythmic ensemble.

This movement has numerous scales that are technically challenging (See Ex. 1-31 and 1-32). To practice these scales, the student must practice slowly, using longer rhythmic values and following each shifting. Only later all the actual notes and rhythms will be added. It is important to know that some of these scales are not diatonic (see Ex. 1-33). Ponce uses a phrygian scale on E in measures 20-21. To set the fingers in this unusual position, the student will work playing first the notes, then adding some simple rhythms and finally playing the way it is written.



Ex. 1-31



Measure 12-13.



Ex. 1-32



Measure 16-17.



Ex. 1-33



Measure 20-21.

Even though this movement contains common shiftings, it is crucial to work some parts separately, taking care of the intonation and fingerings. See the following examples to target specific passages (Ex. 1-34, 1-35, 1-36, 1-37, and 1-38).





Ex. 1-34



Measure 73-74.



Ex. 1-35



Measure 76-81.



Ex. 1-36



Measure 130-131.



Ex. 1-37



Measure 133-134.



Ex. 1-38



Measure 145-149.

The Sonata by Blas Galindo has very complex rhythms and shifts. The student should have complete control of strokes and shiftings. Due to the complexity of this sonata, it is very important to practice with the piano once the notes are learned to become familiar with the new tunes and time signature changes. This rhythmic difficulty is due to Galindo's style of writing, because he used Mexican Indian tunes and complex rhythms as important tool in the composition of his music.

To perform the first movement it is necessary to first practice rhythms in different asymmetric meters because meter change is an essential part of this movement (See Ex.

2-11). Deliberate and slow practice with the pianist counting the beats out loud, would be extremely helpful in order to put this movement together successfully.



Ex. 2-11

Also, the practice of certain scales and arpeggios will be required in order to master the specific shifting. Much of the time these shifts are uncomfortable or unnatural because the melodies are built with unusual intervals. The student must first speak the counts, then add open strings (E, A, D or G) and finally add the notes, making sure he or she is following each fingering. See Ex. 2-12, 2-13, 2-14, 2-15, and 2-16.



Ex. 2-12



Measure 15-17.



Ex. 2-13



Measure 68-70.



Ex. 2-14



Measure 146-147.



Ex. 2-15



Measure 237-238.



Ex. 2-16



Measure 255-256.

In the middle of the piece, broken octaves appear in the violin part; this should be practiced first by playing the top note, the bottom note and finally both notes together, for tuning accuracy (See Ex. 2-17 and 2-18). After these exercises are perfected, the student will play the passages the way there were written.



Ex. 2-17

Measure 263-264.



Ex. 2-18

Measure 273-274.

The second movement has lyrical melodies based on intervals of fourths and sevenths which should be played with a full sound. To achieve this, the student will need to use the entire bow, applying the same pressure from frog to tip. This can be accomplished by practicing slow notes.

Some shifts are required to play this movement. It will be necessary to isolate certain passages, as seen in Ex. 2-21 and 2-22.



Ex. 2-21



Measure 42-45.



Ex. 2-22



Measure 66-67.

The third movement has a rhythmic ostinato as an important characteristic. Second position is most often used to play most of the melodies. The student should

work on a C Major scale to master this position and to set the fingers in this key (See Ex. 2-31).



Ex. 2-31

Several shifting exercises will be required to play this movement proficiently. The most common positions are first, second, third, and fourth. The following exercises will target every section that might pose difficulties for the student.



Ex. 2-32



Measure 13-16.



Ex. 2-33



Measure 17-19.



Ex. 2-34



Measure 65-66.



Ex. 2-35



Measure 70-72



Ex. 2-36



Measure 73-75.



Ex. 2-37



Measure 202-203.



Ex. 2-38



Measure 204-205.

The Sonata Simple by Joaquín Gutiérrez is appropriate for an intermediate student who needs to work on syncopation, phrasing displacement, and shifting to the second and third positions. This sonata makes use of simple melodies, but also has phrasing displacement, which makes it difficult if the student is not comfortable using at least first to third position, at minimum.

The first movement features long phrases which are essential components of this movement. When playing these phrases, the performer has to be careful to use the entire bow, and control the bow pressure in order to have an even sound from frog to tip. It is important to practice long notes using any scale to master this, as seen in Ex. 3-11.



Ex. 3-11

Also, it is important to isolate some sections that require shifts. The student should first play the notes using the following fingering, and then he or she should add the correct rhythm as well as the phrasing. See Ex. 3-12 and 3-13.



Ex. 3-12



Measure 23-26.



Ex. 3-13

Measure 82-84.

In the second movement, Gutiérrez uses syncopation to set his phrases. For success here, it is important to practice dividing the notes into shorter rhythmic values to get a sense of the syncopation (see Ex. 3-22), and after this, the student should play with the correct rhythms.



Ex. 3-22

Measure 18-20.

In the third movement, Gutiérrez uses simple melodies based on a pentatonic series of notes (D, G, A, B and C) to build the phrases. At the end, this pentatonic series is used as a main component of the coda (see Ex. 3-31 and 3-32). The student should practice these five notes to set the fingers, and should also practice isolating every shift.



Ex. 3-31



Measure 1-3.



Ex. 3-32



Measure 75-78.

Every exercise suggested in this chapter is designed to help the student to develop the necessary skills to play these sonatas. The instructor may decide whether or not to use these exercises, depending on the ability of the student. It is important to treat each student individually and to identify his or her different needs.

The sonatas by Ponce and Galindo are appropriate for an advanced student that has already developed high technical skills and a good sense of rhythm. The Sonata Simple by Gutiérrez is an excellent option for the developing student at an intermediate level.

These sonatas provide an excellent addition to the study of the standard violin literature due to the variety of technical levels and the musical quality of the works. Studying these works also provide an opportunity for the student to perform and be familiar with music from other countries that are not yet considered part of the standard repertoire.

## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSION

Unfortunately Mexican art music is not promoted outside of Mexico. Most non-Mexicans have been introduced only to popular Mexican music. However, Mexican art composers, as did nationalistic composers in other countries, tried to rescue their culture and folk traditions through music in order to create a Mexican identity. Before the trend toward Mexican Nationalism in music began in the early twentieth century, Mexican composers were influenced more by the European styles and innovations. Ponce, Galindo, and Gutiérrez are a good example of this search for the Mexican identity.

The sonatas presented in this project are a convenient option for the standard violin repertoire. They have different technical levels, which makes them appropriate for different students.

Included in chapter two is a brief biography on each composer. I consider it to be very important for the violin player to have some knowledge of the composer to better understand the music. The musical analysis, discussed in chapter three, is mainly focused on pedagogical purposes to know how the works are constructed and to understand the stylistic aspects of the piece.

The exercises suggested in chapter four target specific technical issues. These exercises were developed by the author for a performance of these sonatas in a recital called “Mexican Violin Music” held in the UTB/TSC Science and Engineering Technology Building Lecture Hall the 22 of January of 2005. These drills helped me and should help any student to play these works.

To prepare for the “Mexican Violin Music” recital, I first worked on the exercises for each sonata, and then I began to play entire movements. Being aware of the style of the composer also helped me to understand each piece. Some of the movements required



practice with the piano from the beginning; for example, the first and third movements of the Galindo and Ponce sonatas.

The constant repetition of these exercises was essential element to learning these pieces successfully. In my own experience, the most helpful exercises were the ones focused on shifts and crossing strings. Since a violin player can play a single passage in many ways, it took sometime to decide on the final fingerings for the exercises. This process was based on different aspects, such as technical level of the student, shifting vs. string crossing, and most common positions used.

This was a very challenging recital. One of the most demanding aspects was in the preparation. The procedure I followed was: to develop the drills by analyzing the difficulties for each section; to play these drills continuously until they were perfected; and finally to play the entire movement using proper dynamics, bowings, fingerings, and speed. After this was accomplished, I started practicing with the piano: first by playing together an entire work slowly and isolating the most difficult parts; then by working towards an agreement on style, dynamics, and tempo; and finally, by playing an entire movement several times until all these aspects were accurate. These procedures were repeated for every single movement of all the sonatas.

I decided to perform a “Lecture Recital” where I talked about the composers, their works; and pedagogical applications, in addition to performing the sonatas. I tried to avoid highly technical musical terms for this presentation, but when necessary, I demonstrated and explained the terms to the audience. Approximately three hundred listeners attended. They were receptive when I was explaining about each composer and composition, indicating to me that people are interested in learning about music from Mexico, a country very close to Texas and has influenced its culture.

Currently, I am introducing these sonatas to my students. We are following all the exercises suggested in this project, according to the students’ abilities and needs. Although my students are in the early stages of learning these pieces, I know from experience that these drills and this methodology will help them to perform these pieces.

This project successfully introduced to the community twentieth century Mexican music for violin and presented an alternative to the standard violin literature through a pedagogical view.

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