



Carnegie Hill Concerts

September 14, 2023

Ortiz the Musician

*Featuring Miranda Cuckson, Keir GoGwilt, Alec Goldfarb, Conrad Harris, Coleman Itzkoff,
Kyle Motl, and Wilfrido Terrazas*

Ortiz Sobre la Folia (2023)
Keir GoGwilt

La Chacona Huayno (2023)
Keir GoGwilt, Wilfrido Terrazas, Kyle Motl, Alec Goldfarb

Ortiz Sobre la Zarabanda del Guarumo (2023)
Keir GoGwilt

Himno de las Almas (2023)
Keir GoGwilt

La Calandria de Juan (2023)
Wilfrido Terrazas

Tonada Americana / Ortiz Sobre la Chacona (2023)
Vicente Hansen Atria

A la Sombra del Naranja (2023)
Kyle Motl

Ortiz Sobre el Arpeggio (2023)
Keir GoGwilt

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Texts

Texts are attributed to Ortiz, written by Keir GoGwilt, and translated by Wilfrido Terrazas

On the Tuning of the Instrument

Si el alma es el agente principal de un cuerpo viviente, entonces la afinación es el alma del instrumento. Las distintas afinaciones en el mismo instrumento representan las muchas partes o afectos del alma.

Las escalas, modos y arpeggios que resultan de estas afinaciones revelan la constitución del alma y las proporciones de sus partes.

If the soul is the principal agent of a living body, then tuning is the soul of the instrument. Different tunings, on the same instrument, represent the many parts, or affects of the soul.

The scales, modes, and arpeggios which come out of these tunings, reveal the constitution of the soul, and the proportions of its parts..

Himno de las Almas

Bernardino, tú y yo hemos escuchando a mis estudiantes cantar a la fragancia de las flores y a las aves de muchas voces y a la música de sonajas.

Mi maestro hablaba de la música de las esferas, escuchando proporciones divinas en los intervalos imperfectos de nuestros instrumentos.

Lo que escucho entre los árboles vivientes no son ni pájaros preciosos ni armonías cósmicas, sino fantasmas. Los oigo aún en nuestros arcos y guitarras, talladas del árbol de guarumo, y en nuestras entorchadas cuerdas hechas de fibra de su corteza.

Estos fantasmas viven en nuestros instrumentos e intervalos musicales. Nuestros himnos están poseídos por el batir y zumbar de estos árboles muertos.

Escucho.

He aquí el estridulado de las cigarras.

Ahora una voz espectral, desde arriba pero más suave que las demás, como escarbando en nuestros oídos.

De nuevo aquí el sonido de las cigarras, más fuerte.

Las cigarras se enjambran y se convierten en una interminable hoja amalgamada de oro y cobre.

Ahora, el sonido de martillos en la maleza, el ruido sordo del metal al ser forjado.

Ya no taño más los instrumentos entre los árboles vivientes.

Bernardino, you and I have heard my students sing in dedication to the fragrance of flowers and the many-voiced birds and the music of rattles.

My teacher spoke of the music of the spheres, hearing divine proportions in the imperfect intervals of our instruments.

What I hear, in and amongst the living trees, are neither precious birds nor cosmic harmonies, but ghosts. I hear them still in our bows and guitars carved from the snakewood trees (*guarumo*), and in our strings wound from fibers of their bark.

These ghosts live in our musical instruments and intervals. Our hymns are possessed by the beating and buzzing of these dead trees.

I am listening.

Here, the stridulation of cicadas.

Then a spectral voice, above but softer than the others, as though burrowing in our ears.

Here again the sound of the cicadas, louder.

The cicadas swarm and metamorphose into an endless sheet of gold and copper alloy.

Now, the sound of hammers in the thicket; the dull clank of metal being molded and moved.

I no longer play the instruments in and amongst the living trees.

Ortiz on the Arpeggio / Story of the Broken Harps

Para producir el efecto de arpa rota, el brazo derecho se mueve de manera circular sobre las cuerdas de la viola.

Esta moción física perturba la delgada sustancia de aire de las emociones. Actuando sobre el puente, esta técnica enlaza los mundos de lo físico y lo metafísico.

Lo que es desplazado—el tono, el reposo del cuerpo, el acorde—debe estar en movimiento. Así como la corteza del árbol puede ser cuerda al entorcharse, así los órganos del cuerpo se entorchan y se tensan, de manera que resonamos con perturbaciones vibratorias.

To produce the broken harp effect, the right arm moves in a circular fashion to cross over the strings of the viol.

This physical motion disturbs the thin, air-like substance of the emotions. Acting upon the bridge, this technique bridges the worlds of the physical and metaphysical.

What is displaced—the tone, the repose of the body, the chord—must be in motion. Just as the bark of the tree may be wound into strings, so too the organs of the body are wound and strung, so that we resonate with vibratory disturbances.

Program Notes

Ortiz Sobre la Folia (2023)

The bass line for *Sobre la Folia* is taken from a folia by the 16th-century Spanish composer, Diego Ortiz. Diego Ortiz was a younger contemporary of Ortiz the musician, and as far as we know Diego never traveled to the Americas. The initial impetus for this piece came from imagining Ortiz the musician as a string player composing music in the context of New Spain contemporaneously with Diego Ortiz. [KG]

La Chacona Huayno (2023)

In the Spanish priest Bartolomé de las Casas's account of the destruction of the Indies, he describes festive songs and dances performed by the Aztecs for their king Montezuma, who was imprisoned by the conquistadors.¹ Ortiz's account of the same festival focuses more on the music: a lilting, oddly-metered but rhythmic dance, perhaps resembling an early progenitor of the chacona (a genre well-known to European Baroque musicians).

As Susan McClary points out, the chacona was imported to Europe by 16th-century conquistadors in Central and South America. Ned Sublette further fleshes out the American origins of the chacona, referencing the Spanish poet Lope de Vega's mention of the dance: "(From the Indies to Sevilla / it has come by post)."² Sublette suggests that the chacona, like the zarabanda, likely traces back to music from the Congo, brought by the Congolese people who comprised the majority of slave labor in Cuba (and elsewhere in Latin America). The zarabanda traces its name back to the Bantu word, "nsala-banda," roughly translated in English as "let the spirit rip."³ Both the chacona and the zarabanda have been grouped together as part of the same "matrix"⁴ of 6/8 dance forms that moved between Latin America and Europe. Rogelio Budasz has pointed out (following Gerhard Kubik and Peter Fryer) that "during the 17th and 18th centuries many dances of African influence appeared almost simultaneously in different points of the so-called Atlantic triangle, a region that comprised coastal cities of the Congo-Angola, Iberian Peninsula and Latin America."⁵

¹ Las Casas, "A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies" (1552)

² Ned Sublette, *Cuba and Its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press), 81.

³ Sublette, *Cuba and Its Music*, 81.

⁴ Van der Lee, Pedro. "Zarabanda: Esquemas rítmicos de acompañamiento en 6/8." *Latin American Music Review/Revista de Música Latinoamericana* 16.2 (1995): 199–220.

⁵ Rogério Budasz, "Black Guitar-Players and Early African-Iberian Music in Portugal and Brazil." *Early Music* 25.1 (2007): 4.

This piece combines a number of elements in improvisatory ways: a Huayno melody composed by Wilfrido, the Mexica dance witnessed and transcribed by Ortiz (and composed by Keir), and improvised harmonic filigree which adds to the mediated layers of this imagined account. [KG]

Zarabanda del Guarumo (2023)

Guarumo is a wood found throughout Mexico which has been used to make musical instruments. The title of this dance (somewhat fancifully called a “zarabanda”) refers to the wood that made the bows of Ortiz’s violas and the necks of his guitars. The fast dance features rhythmic phrases which do not fit in any recurring, regular meter. The opening and conclusion of the piece attempt to move the rhythmic play between 6/8 and 3/4 into a more extended, melodic form. [KG]

Himno de las Almas (2023)

Himno de las Almas is a quartet based on “Hanacpachap Cussicuinin,” a processional hymn to the Virgin Mary which was published in the early 17th century. It appears in the *Ritual, formulario e institución de curas*, written in Quechua and Spanish, and collected by the Franciscan friar Juan Pérez Bocanegra. The hymn itself was composed by an Incan student of Bocanegra’s, in Quechua.

The source material for this piece is removed from Ortiz’s context in terms of history and geography, and the hymn serves as only a loose scaffold for the phrases of the *Himno de las Almas*. Other hymns in Nahuatl would have been closer, such as those composed by Hernando Franco or Hernando Francisco—an indigenous composer who took the same name as the 16th-century Spanish composer and *maestro de capilla* in Mexico City. However, I found the slow moving harmonies and voicing of “Hanacpachap Cussicuinin” lent themselves to the sonic distortions that Ortiz began to observe in his later, esoteric years, which, in my imagination, he spent carefully tuning intervals on viols and early violins.

The beating, buzzing, and phantom tones that arose in these tunings, were a source of both wonderment and concern for Ortiz. His diaries (which I have ghost-written) attest to the uncanny nature of these phenomena, which for him recalled the most violent episodes of the Spanish bloody conquest, and their single-minded efforts to extract as much gold from the Indigenous populations as possible. [KG]

La Calandria de Juan (2023)

La calandria de Juan (John’s Lark) is a three-part melody I wrote during the preparatory residency for the project Ortiz the Musician, at Yellow Barn, in Putney, Vermont. The melody is inspired by (and borrows musical fragments from) two very different sources: on the one hand, from the polyphonic lament *Velum Templi Scissum Est*, written for the sixth day of the Easter Celebration by Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla, a Spanish-born

composer who spent most of his life working in the New Spain in the 17th century, notably as *maestro de capilla* at the Cathedral of Puebla; and, on the other hand, from *La media calandria*, an anonymous *son* belonging to the *Son de Arpa Grande* folk tradition that emerged probably at some point in the 19th century in the hot lands of southwestern Michoacán, Mexico, and is still very much alive. [WT]

Tonada Americana / Ortiz Sobre la Chacona (2023), by Vicente Hansen Atria

Ortiz sobre la chacona (Americana) speculates on the mysterious origins of the chaconne. A rarefied and solemn form in the baroque, the chaconne emerged in late sixteenth century South America as a relatively fast and playful dance. Americana is a kind of temporal and geographical palimpsest, imagining a music that combines the original spirit of the chaconne with its baroque European translation. It also points to the uncanny similarities between the chaconne and various forms of American folk music, from Chilean guitarra traspuesta and tonada to protestant hymns and the blues. These convergences suggest the manifold lives and identities of the chaconne — or perhaps, of what gave birth to it. In this paradoxical encounter, hybridity appears not as a finished blend of defined elements, but as a riddle, where the familiar begins to sound strange. [VHA]

A la Sombra del Naranja (2023), by Kyle Motl

I'm interested in a timeless music. This tune, not moored to any one time, place, or tradition, takes as its base Latin American bass traditions, folded into a vertical sensibility, where varied tonalities and temperaments exist in plurality. [KM]

Ortiz Sobre el Arpeggio (2023), by Keir GoGwilt

“To produce the broken harp effect, the right arm moves in a circular fashion to cross over the strings of the viol.

This physical motion disturbs the thin, air-like substance of the emotions. Acting upon the bridge, this technique bridges the worlds of the physical and metaphysical.

What is displaced—the tone, the repose of the body, the chord—must be in motion. Just as the bark of the tree may be wound into strings, so too the organs of the body are wound and strung, so that we resonate with vibratory disturbances.” [Ortiz the Musician, ghost-written by KG]

Further Listening

Youtube Playlist: https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxS6hMEx-jUB4ypgV8mKxbBOeGMnKHnQN&si=y9-qe_5r76hh1-Jd

Further Reading

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