

ALBERTO GINASTERA'S *TRES PIEZAS, SUITE DE DANZAS CRIOLLAS*,
AND PIANO SONATA NO. 3: A PERFORMANCE GUIDE

by

MINSIL CHOO

(Under the Direction of Evgeny Rivkin)

ABSTRACT

An Argentine composer of the twentieth century, Alberto Ginastera reflects Argentine culture and musical style in his music. Even though there are many sources concerning Ginastera's music, most discussions lack applicable information for performing his compositions. For this reason, this study provides a performance guide for less performed pieces in Ginastera's output, specifically *Tres Piezas* (Three Pieces), Op. 6, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Op. 15, and Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 54.

Musical styles from Argentine culture, the composer's biography and examples reflecting the musical characteristics from Ginastera's different compositional style periods of "objective nationalism," "subjective nationalism," and "neo-Expressionism" are provided. For all three compositions, *Tres Piezas*, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and Piano Sonata No. 3, an analysis of the musical form and the musical elements introducing Argentine dance rhythms of each piece are also included.

Additionally, this guide provides performance suggestions concerning musical details, such as fingering and pedaling, as well as specific practice strategies and

suggestions for challenging passages found in *Tres Piezas, Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and Piano Sonata No. 3.

INDEX WORDS: Alberto Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Ginastera
Piano Sonata No. 3, Argentine rhythm

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Need for Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a performance guide for *Tres Piezas, Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and Piano Sonata No. 3 by Alberto Ginastera. His piano compositions not only show Argentine folk musical characteristics but also provide the national sound of Argentina to an audience.

Even though Ginastera's works remain in various piano repertoires, certain pieces such as *Danzas Argentinas* and his first Piano Sonata are more frequently selected for performance than his other compositions. For this reason, this document will be a performance guide for less performed pieces in Ginastera's output; specifically, the discussion of *Tres Piezas* (Three Pieces), Op. 6, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Op. 15, and his Third Piano Sonata, Op. 54 will be helpful in introducing new repertoires for pianists.

The document will provide the performance suggestions of musical details such as fingering and pedaling, including musical analysis of the basic form. Furthermore, it will recommend specific practice suggestions and strategies for challenging passages in *Tres Piezas, Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and Piano Sonata No. 3.

Ginastera's works are categorized into three compositional style periods, with his earliest period (1934-1947) embodying "an objective nationalism." Directly inspired by Argentine musical traditions and folk elements, the music from this first period conveys

national ideas and symbols.¹ Composed in 1940, *Tres Piezas* is an example piece that introduces his first period and includes three different dances: *Cuyana*, *Norteña*, and *Criolla*. Six years later, Ginastera traveled to the United States for a Guggenheim fellowship and composed *Suite de Danzas Criollas* in 1946. Revised in 1956, he considers *Suite de Danzas Criollas* to be the first piece of his second compositional style in piano music. In this second style period, Ginastera describes his compositions as having a “subjective nationalism,” and he begins to put new material in his compositions. Although he continues to use Argentine folk elements such as specific rhythms and melodies within the Suite, Ginastera says “this material is used in a new, personal and imaginative way, as if inspired by a folklore dream.”² During his third period known as “neo-Expressionism,” Ginastera experiments with new and unusual compositional techniques such as avant-garde practices and serialism. Composed in 1982, Piano Sonata No. 3 is an example piece reflecting the characteristics of the third period using twentieth century techniques such as tone clusters, poly chords, and poly scales.

This document will introduce these three compositions that reflect Argentine national characteristics found in the music. In addition, the suggestions included in this performance guide will enable pianists to give a better performance.

Literature Review

Many researchers who were interested in Ginastera’s music started to write about him and his musical style based on the Argentine musical tradition. The contributions of Gilbert Chase, Deborah Schwartz-Kates, and Mary Ann Hanley particularly provide

¹ Mary Ann Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part I,” *American Music Teacher* 24, no. 6 (1975): 18.

² Mary Ann Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part II,” *American Music Teacher* 25, no. 1 (1975): 6.

valuable and useful articles for studying and understanding the origins and background of his music. These sources describe how Ginastera's music fits in with the gauchesco tradition. Introducing Ginastera's biography and cultural background, Chase points out in his articles "Alberto Ginastera: Argentine Composer" and "Alberto Ginastera: Portrait of an Argentine composer" how Ginastera uses the *malambo* rhythm and symbolic guitar chord, both which are commonly used characteristics of this tradition.³ Deborah Schwartz-Kates, the author who wrote an article about Alberto Ginastera in The New Grove Dictionary, introduces his detailed biography, his compositional styles, and includes his compositions. Her article, "Alberto Ginastera, Argentine Cultural Construction, and the Gauchesco Tradition," discusses important details about the gauchesco history. Mary Ann Hanley contributed to the research of his piano compositions with a brief overview in her article and dissertation, "Compositions for Solo Piano by Alberto Ginastera." Also, pianist Barbara Nissman provides the background of Piano Sonata No. 3 and Ginastera's musical style in her article "Remembering Alberto Ginastera-A Centenary Tribute" and on her website. For a long time, Nissman had been interested in Ginastera's music, and Ginastera even dedicated his final composition, Piano Sonata No. 3, to her.

In addition to articles, there are dissertations discussing Ginastera and his compositions. "Argentine folk elements in the solo piano works of Alberto Ginastera" by Roy Wylie and "A performer's analytical guide to indigenous dance rhythms in the solo piano works of Alberto Ginastera" by Francis Davis Pittman are dissertations analyzing solo piano compositions focusing on the dance rhythms related to Argentine folk elements. David Edward Wallace's "Alberto Ginastera: An Analysis of His Style and

³ Deborah Schwartz-Kates, *Alberto Ginastera: A Research and Information Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 116.

Techniques of Compositions” also studies the melodic, rhythmic, and musical structure based on theoretical analysis.

Although there are multiple publications about Ginastera’s music, most sources have limitations in connecting the information to real performance. While introducing *Tres Piezas, Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and his Piano Sonata No. 3 from Ginastera’s three different style periods, this document provides the analysis of each piece, further incorporating performance suggestions.

Rationale

Alberto Ginastera was an Argentine composer in the twentieth century reflecting Argentine culture in his music. His first published piano composition was *Danzas Argentinas* in 1937. Ginastera continued his passion for writing piano works until his death, with his last work being his Piano Sonata No. 3. His contribution to piano compositions is revealed through his three different periods featuring musical innovations combining new elements.

Interest in Ginastera’s music has continued, resulting in useful sources in the study of his music; however, many researchers are inclined to focus on analyzing his musical forms and harmonic and rhythmic characteristics based on Argentine culture. Although their studies provide insight into his compositional style and musical background, the materials have limitations in helping pianists solve the technical problems that they confront in their performances. As compensation for limitations of prior studies, this document will give a performance guide of *Tres Piezas, Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and his Piano Sonata No. 3. Since *Tres Piezas* was composed in the first

period, *Suite de Danzas Criollas* in the second, and Piano Sonata No. 3 in the third, they describe Argentine dances and gauchesco tradition combining musical styles and techniques from each period. Through studying different pieces from three periods, this document should help to solve technical problems and provide performers useful suggestions for all of Ginastera's compositional and musical styles.

Organization of the Document

Before analyzing his music, this document introduces the biography of Alberto Ginastera and his compositions. Based on his three different periods, it includes his musical style from early period to late period as well as gives examples reflecting his musical characteristics.

Chapter 3 focuses on the analysis of *Tres Piezas* (1940), consisting of three dances: *Cuyana*, *Norteña*, and *Criolla*. In the order of the three dances, an analysis of the musical form of each dance and the musical characteristics introducing Argentine dance rhythms found in each piece are included. In addition to the musical analysis of the piece, this document presents performance suggestions including fingering and pedaling. Furthermore, there are suggestions for ways to practice specific passages that demand challenging piano techniques. Following the same structure as Chapter 3, Chapter 4 concentrates on the analysis and performance suggestions for *Suite de Danzas Criollas* which consists of five different dances: Adagietto pianissimo, Allegro rustico, Allegretto cantabile, Calmo e poetico, and Scherzando. Chapter 5 discusses his Piano Sonata No. 3.

The conclusion of this study, Chapter 6, summarizes musical characteristics of *Tres Piezas*, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and Piano Sonata No. 3 and explains how these

musical traits make these dances interesting, reminding performers that *Tres Piezas*, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and Piano Sonata No. 3 are valuable pieces to perform.

CHAPTER 2

THREE PERIODS OF ALBERTO GINASTERA

Biography

One of the most prominent composers of the Americas in the 20th century, Alberto Ginastera was born in Buenos Aires on April 11, 1916. Even from an early age, Ginastera demonstrated a natural talent for music. At seven years old, he began to formally study music. He continued his musical studies at the Williams Conservatory where he received a gold medal for composition in 1935. The year after graduating he was accepted into the National Conservatory of Music where he studied composition with Jose Andre, harmony with Athos Palma, and counterpoint with Jose Gil.¹

Although Ginastera had composed multiple pieces during his time at the National Conservatory, his earliest accepted works were composed in 1937. These compositions are three *Danzas Argentinas* for piano and *Panambi*. *Panambi* was originally written as a ballet about the Guarany Indians of Argentina; however, an orchestral suite from *Panambi* achieved fame when it was conducted by Juan Jose Castro at the Teatro Colon three years prior to the premiere of the ballet. Even though Ginastera's next ballet, *Estancia*, was commissioned for the American Ballet Caravan, it achieved success in concert as an orchestral suite and was never actually performed by the American Ballet Caravan.² After the completion of *Estancia* in 1941, Ginastera became known for his

¹ Deborah Schwartz-Kates, "Alberto Ginastera," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., Stanley Sadie, 29 vols., (London: Macmillan, 2001), Volume 9:875.

² Gilbert Chase, "Alberto Ginastera: Argentine Composer," *The Musical Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (1957): 440.

contributions to the development of Argentine music.³

In addition to establishing himself as a composer, Ginastera experienced other major life changes in 1941. He became a teacher at San Martin National Military Academy and the National Conservatory, and in the later part of the year, he married Mercedes de Toro. They eventually had two children.⁴

Although Ginastera received a Guggenheim fellowship in 1942, he did not go to the United States until 1946 because of the war. He spent most of his time in New York. His Duo for Flute and Oboe was also performed in New York at a concert of the League of Composers.⁵

Ginastera founded the Conservatory of Music and Scenic Art of the Province of Buenos Aires in the town of La Plata in 1948 and was chosen to be the director;⁶ however, because of conflict with the Peron regime of Argentina, he had to step down from his position and did not recover the directorship until 1956, one year after Peron lost power. During this period, Ginastera was still able to compose, producing three of his outstanding and highly recognized works, Piano Sonata No. 1 (1952), *Variaciones concertantes* (1953), and *Pampeana* No. 3 (1954).⁷

After a short period as a professor at La Plata in 1958, Ginastera left that position the same year and became the dean of musical arts and sciences at the Catholic University of Argentina. As dean from 1958-63, he not only coordinated and directed the faculty but also created a more advanced and innovative music program including degrees in education, sacred music, composition, and musicology. He continued to

³ Chase, "Alberto Ginastera: Argentine Composer," 441.

⁴ Schwartz-Kates, "Alberto Ginastera," 875.

⁵ Chase, 441.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 442.

⁷ Schwartz-Kates, 875.

compose as well. Written in 1958, his String Quartet No. 2 integrated older musical techniques and ideas with brief periods of serialism.⁸

From 1963-64, Ginastera composed the opera *Don Rodrigo* which included the use of microtones, extended vocal techniques, serialism, and structural symmetry. Chosen by the New York City Opera as the first opera for its new performance setting, *Don Rodrigo* brought much critical acclaim after its debut in February 1966. Because of its great success, Ginastera was commissioned by the Opera Society of Washington to create a new opera, so he composed *Bomarzo* in 1966-67. Although it was initially well-received, unconcealed eroticism caused the local government of Buenos Aires to call off a performance that was supposed to occur later that year. This resulted in Ginastera not allowing any of his compositions to be performed until the government changed its decision.⁹

During the late 1960s, Ginastera experienced problems in his personal life, one being the separation from his wife. Although these personal problems led to difficulties in finishing his compositions, he was still able to complete his commissions, specifically his third opera, *Beatrix Cenci*. Argentine cellist Aurora Natola helped to revive his interest in composing, and in 1971, he married her and moved to Switzerland. He continued to compose for the next twelve years until his death in 1983.¹⁰

Compositions

Alberto Ginastera's compositions can be separated into three distinct style periods. Described as "objective nationalism," his first compositional style occurred from 1934-47.

⁸ Schwartz-Kates, "Alberto Ginastera," 875.

⁹ Ibid., 875-876.

¹⁰ Ibid., 876.

Compositions during this time directly use folk elements from Argentine music in a conventional tonal setting. His second style period occurred from 1947-57 and is referred to as “subjective nationalism.” During these years, Ginastera still took ideas and symbols from Argentine music but presented them in a less obvious way, truly creating a more original style. His third style, the “neo-Expressionism” period from 1958-83, incorporated more contemporary procedures such as serialism and avant-garde techniques.¹¹

Objective nationalism

In his first compositional period extending from 1934 to 1947, Ginastera labels this style as portraying “an objective nationalism” where “the primitive impulse rings strong.” Although he mentions composers Bartok, de Falla, Stravinsky, Ravel, and Debussy as musical influences for this first period, he primarily received inspiration from Argentine symbols, traditions, and folk elements.¹²

One way Ginastera portrayed nationalism in his music during this first period was imitating the sound of the guitar as played by the gaucho, thus establishing the guitar chord as a symbol of Argentina. Ginastera employed this musical device throughout his entire musical career.¹³ By using the pitches of the open strings of a guitar, E-A-d-g-b-e’, he was able to not only evoke the image of the instrument and the gaucho but also employ the pitches of the Argentine minor pentatonic scale, E-G-A-B-D.¹⁴

In addition to the use of the pitches of guitar strings, Ginastera took rhythmic

¹¹ Schwartz-Kates, “Alberto Ginastera,” 876.

¹² Mary Ann Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part I,” *American Music Teacher* 24, no. 6 (1975): 18.

¹³ Mary Ann Hanley, “The Compositions for Solo Piano by Alberto Ginastera” (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 1969), 11, accessed November 24, 2017, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

¹⁴ Schwartz-Kates, 876.

elements found in the dances of Argentina, specifically borrowing from the dance of the gauchos, the *malambo*.¹⁵



Example 1. *Malambo* rhythm patterns¹⁶

The *malambo* is in 6/8 meter and has a fast tempo, with rhythm patterns consisting of quickly moving eighth notes ending in a dotted quarter note. The longer value of the dotted quarter note indicates a moment of rest, creating a “brake” effect.¹⁷

The *malambo* was not the only Argentine dance that inspired Ginastera during his early writing period. He was also influenced by the *zamba*, *chacarera*, and *gato*. With a slow to moderate tempo set in a 6/8 meter, the *zamba* is a passionate dance for couples involving a handkerchief. More of a folk dance, the *chacarera* is also in a 6/8 time signature but has a faster tempo and features syncopation throughout. One of the more popular social dances of Argentina, Ginastera frequently uses the *gato* in his compositions.¹⁸

Another musical technique that Ginastera used in order to convey nationalism was

¹⁵ Chase, “Alberto Ginastera: Argentine Composer,” 454.

¹⁶ Ibid., 455.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Deborah Schwartz-Kates, *Alberto Ginastera: A Research and Information Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 35.

the doubling of melody lines with various sonorities, specifically parallel thirds. He used this Iberian-based folk practice in his *Malambo*, Op. 7 (1940). Beginning with an eight-measure theme, Ginastera initially doubled the melody with more simple sonorities, such as parallel thirds, but then increasingly added more complex harmonies, such as major triads, quartal chords, major seventh chords with augmented fifths, and other dissonances.¹⁹

Although Ginastera had composed works previously, he considered his first true compositions to be *Danzas Argentinas* and *Panambi*. Concerning these works, he said, “I really think that my first works that reveal a certain personality are the *Danzas Argentinas* and *Panambi*. All of the foregoing have been the essays of a good student. That is why the *Segunda sinfonia (Elegiaca)* has remained as the first, with the title *Sinfonia elegiaca*. You can clarify in your article that although well before *Panambi* and the *Danzas Argentinas* I had written various other works, these two works should be considered the first, according to my wishes.”²⁰

Composed in 1937, *Danzas Argentinas* was Ginastera’s first work written for piano. The success of this work not only displayed his exceptional skill for writing for piano but also solidified his standing as a prominent composer of the Argentine tradition.²¹ Using some compositional techniques of Bartok in *Danzas Argentinas*, Ginastera said this about his work: “When I composed my Argentine Dances for piano in 1937, Bartok’s influence was present. My ‘folklore imaginaire’ begins there, with its polytonal harmonizations, its strong, marked rhythms—the Bartokian ‘feverish

¹⁹ Schwartz-Kates, *Alberto Ginastera: A Research and Information Guide*, 30.

²⁰ Gilbert Chase, “Remembering Alberto Ginastera,” *Latin American Music Review* 6, no. 1 (1985): 82.

²¹ Gilbert Chase, “Alberto Ginastera: Portrait of an Argentine Composer,” *Tempo*, no. 44 (1957): 12.

excitement'-all within a total pianism where the spirit of a national music is recreated."²²

Inspired by the story of the native Guarany Indians, *Panambi* was written as a ballet, and the score was finished in 1937. Considered a "choreographic legend in one act," the music was successful as a concert suite for orchestra prior to the premiere of the ballet at the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires in July, 1940.²³

Other early piano compositions written by Ginastera period include *Infantiles* (date not available), *Tres Piezas* (1940), *Malambo* (1940), and *Twelve American Preludes* (1944).

Two other examples of orchestral compositions from Ginastera's first style period are *Estancia* and Overture for the Creole "Faust." Both of these works convey Argentine symbolism through references to gauchesco literature.²⁴ *Estancia* was Ginastera's first extremely significant composition. A ballet "inspired by scenes of Argentine rural life," *Estancia* features excerpts from the gauchesco epic poem, "Martin Fierro."²⁵ The last dance of *Estancia*, the *Malambo*, is a very lively, conventional dance of the gauchos. Its rhythmic build and intensity make this the ultimate embodiment of the gauchesco spirit found in symphonic music.²⁶

Ginastera once again employed elements of the gauchesco tradition in his Overture for the Creole "Faust." Written in 1943, the overture was inspired by "Fausto of Estanislao del Campo," a humorous work of gauchesco poetry released in 1866. Subtitled "Impressions of the gaucho Anastasio el Pollo at the representation of this opera," the poem tells the story of the gaucho Anastasio who sees a performance of Gounod's

²² Alberto Ginastera, "Homage to Béla Bartók," *Tempo*, no. 136 (1981): 4.

²³ Chase, "Alberto Ginastera: Portrait of an Argentine Composer," 12.

²⁴ Schwartz-Kates, "Alberto Ginastera," 876.

²⁵ Chase, "Alberto Ginastera: Argentine Composer," 446.

²⁶ Chase, "Alberto Ginastera: Portrait of an Argentine Composer," 12.

Faust.²⁷

Subjective Nationalism

Described as having “subjective nationalism,” Ginastera’s second compositional period began in 1947. During this time, Ginastera says that his music developed a greater complexity, using less simplistic form and more complicated musical techniques. Even though his compositions continued to maintain the character of Argentine music, he started experimenting with atonal language and even serialism.²⁸

Ginastera considered his two best piano works to be *Suite de Danzas Criollas* and Sonata for piano, both which occurred during the second style period.²⁹ *Suite de Danzas Criollas* demonstrates his new evolved style. Even though he continued to use aspects such as rhythm and melody of Argentine folk music, it was less like the original materials.³⁰ In his Sonata for piano composed in 1952, Ginastera uses the compositional technique of atonality. The following is Ginastera’s description of the style of his Sonata for piano: “The Sonata is written with polytonal and twelve-tone procedures. The composer does not employ any folkloric material, but instead introduces in the thematic texture rhythmic and melodic motives whose expressive tension has a pronounced Argentine accent.”³¹

Rondo on Argentine Children’s Folk Tunes is another piano piece composed during his second style period. Ginastera departed from his new compositional style in favor of using specific Argentine folk melodies most likely derived from French music.

²⁷ Chase, “Alberto Ginastera: Argentine Composer,” 446.

²⁸ Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part I,” 18.

²⁹ Mary Ann Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part II,” *American Music Teacher* 25, no. 1 (1975): 7.

³⁰ Hanley, “The Compositions for Solo Piano by Alberto Ginastera,” 41.

³¹ Chase, “Alberto Ginastera: Argentine Composer,” 451.

This composition was written for his children, Alex and Georgina.³²

Although Ginastera's compositions demonstrate his detailed attention to form and musical construction, he compensated for this by including improvisatory sections in his music. Two examples of this are his *Pampeana* No. 1 (1947) and *Pampeana* No. 2 (1950). Both subtitled "rhapsody," these pieces include lengthy solo cadenzas.³³

Neo-Expressionism

Beginning in 1960, Ginastera's third style period, "Neo-Expressionism," features compositions with a more personal and emotional aspect. Including more abstract, international, and fantastical elements, this style is more passionate and dramatic, possessing more of a mysterious poetic nature.³⁴

For this third compositional period, Ginastera was heavily influenced by the composers of the Second Viennese School. Drawing from their use of dodecaphony, he composed *Cantata para America magica* (1960), a piece for soprano and 53 percussion instruments. Similar to the symmetry found in the music of Webern, the fourth movement is a musical palindrome centered around a 12-note cluster. Another technique Ginastera borrowed from the Second Viennese School was Schoenberg's use of *Klangfarben melodie*, which he employed in his compositions *Milena* (1971) and String Quartet No. 3 (1973).³⁵

Additional works of Ginastera's late period are his Sonata for guitar (1976), Sonata for cello and piano (1979), the second Sonata for piano (1981), and the third

³² Hanley, "The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part II," 7.

³³ Schwartz-Kates, "Alberto Ginastera," 877.

³⁴ Hanley, "The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera Part I," 18.

³⁵ Schwartz-Kates, "Alberto Ginastera," 877.

Sonata for piano (1982). Although these works encompass various Argentine folk elements, they contain other musical practices that make their nationalism much less obvious than the compositions of the “objective nationalism” style period. For example, even though the second and third piano Sonatas are based on folk songs and dances of Argentina, they contain avant-garde techniques, a style that Ginastera used from 1963 to 1972.³⁶

Composed during the third style period, *Don Rodrigo*, Ginastera’s first opera, employs serialism based on different rhythms. By incorporating serialism into such a large work, Ginastera not only gives the opera a sense of unity throughout but also quite a dramatic presence.³⁷

Ginastera’s opera *Bomarzo* also implements the techniques of serialism. His later works, starting with his Second String Quartet (1958) and beyond, reshape the ideas of atonality by utilizing serialism, therefore giving those works a more structured feel. Although these works incorporate serialism, they vary greatly from the twelve-note technique of Schoenberg and his colleagues.³⁸

³⁶ Michelle Tabor, “Alberto Ginastera’s Late Instrumental Style,” *Latin American Music Review* 15, no. 1 (1994): 4.

³⁷ Pola Suarez Urtubey, “Alberto Ginastera’s ‘Don Rodrigo,’” *Tempo*, New Series, no. 74 (1965): 12.

³⁸ Pola Suarez Urtubey, “Ginastera’s ‘Bomarzo,’” *Tempo*, no. 84 (1968): 17.

CHAPTER 3
ANALYSIS OF *TRES PIEZAS*

Written in 1940, Ginastera's piano suite *Tres Piezas* (Three Pieces), Op. 6 features three dances: *Cuyana*, *Norteña*, and *Criolla*. The publisher is Ricordi, and in the United States, it was distributed by Belwin-Mills Corp. Each dance is symbolic of women from specific areas of Argentina. *Cuyana* represents a woman from the region of Cuyo, *Norteña* symbolizes a woman from the North, and *Criolla* exemplifies a lady with creole ancestry.¹

Cuyana

The form of *Cuyana*, containing simple folk-like melodies² through its 66 measures, is ABA'B'. In the first A section, measures 1-15 have a more melodic theme with some arpeggio like figuration. The first B section from measures 16-37, features a more percussive melody with many repeated notes. Both the melodies of the first A and B sections are decorated with the rhythm of the *gato*, which is a dance from Cuyo. Both sections return with slight modifications when the A section repeats in measures 38-45 and when the final section B repeats in measures 46-66. The second A and B sections prominently feature the rhythm of the *zamba* within the melodic themes.

According to Slonimsky, the melody of Latin America is comprised of the

¹ Mary Ann Hanley, "The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part I," *American Music Teacher* 24, no. 6 (1975): 19.

² *Ibid.*

following characteristics: “the melodic components of Latin-American songs and dances are of three folded extraction, Indian, Negro, and European. The Indians contribute the basic pentatonic pattern, the Colonial European influence is expressed in the extension of scale and the addition of chord harmony, and the Negros add chromatic elaboration.”³ In *Cuyana*, Ginastera shows the influence of the Indians, Colonial European, and the Negro. For example, in measure 2, Ginastera begins melody with pentatonic pattern. And then, extending of the pentatonic pattern, he adds chromatic elaboration.

Example 2. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Cuyana*, mm. 1-5

In the accompaniment, Ginastera uses an almost constant flow of widely arpeggiated sixteenth notes. Although he uses this pattern throughout the piece, in the repeat of the A and B sections, he interrupts the sixteenth notes with repeated pianissimo fourth chords played in both hands. The fourth chords are a half-step apart, creating a sense of polytonality (See Example 3).⁴

³ Nicolas Slonimsky, *Music of Latin America* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1945), 54-55.

⁴ Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part I,” 19.

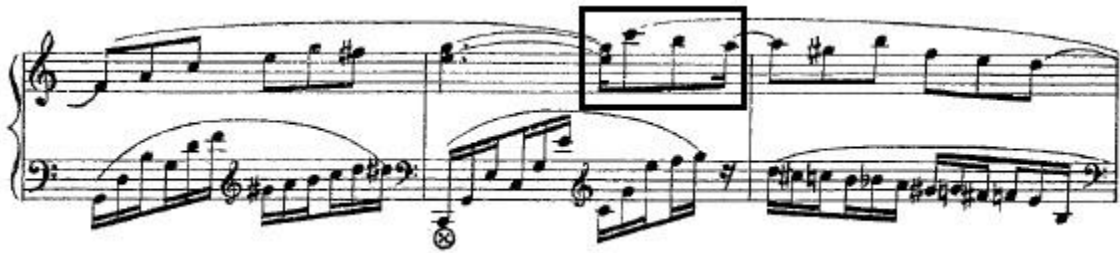
Example 3. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Cuyana*, mm. 37-44

The rhythmic component of *Cuyana* stems from the title, which represents the province of Cuyo. The Cuyo region features dance music, such as the *zamba* and *gato*, with the *gato* even having its own specific choreography. Irma Ruiz discusses the origin of the Cuyo province and its music in his article. Concerning its background, he says, “The Cuyo region belonged to Chile until 1778, and it continued to identify culturally with Chile until the beginning of the 19th century. For this reason, its musical genres are similar to those of central Chile.”⁵ Ruiz explains how the dances of Cuyo have similar origins to the dances of Chile. For example, Chile’s national dance, the *cueca*, originated from the Peruvian *zamacueca*, and the Argentine dance, the *zamba*, originated from the *zamacueca* as well. Although both the *cueca* and *zamba* had similar roots, the *cueca*

⁵ Irma Ruiz, “Argentina,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., Stanley Sadie, 29 vols., (London: Macmillan, 2001), Volume 1:879-880.

usually features more energetic rhythm than the rhythm of the *zamba*.⁶

Reflecting this regional dance style, Ginastera uses the dance rhythms of the *zamba* and *gato* in *Cuyana*. However, he uses a 12/16 meter for this piece, contrasting the original *gato* and *zamba* rhythm of 6/8 and making the rhythm of *Cuyana* two times faster instead. For example, the original *gato* rhythm (♩ ♩ ♩) appears two times faster with shorter rhythmic values in measure 7.



Example 4. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Cuyana*, mm. 6-8

As he returns to section A with a double bar line, Ginastera introduces *zamba* rhythms while he continues to use a melody decorated with the *gato* rhythm from the first A section. Just as Ginastera manipulated the *gato* rhythm from section A, the *zamba* rhythms in measures 39-41 are two times faster than original *zamba* rhythm pattern (♩ ♩ ♩) (See Example 5).

⁶ Ruiz, "Argentina," 879-880.



Example 5. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Cuyana*, mm. 37-41

Performance Suggestions

Ginastera presents a time signature of 12/16 for *Cuyana*. This time signature indicates that there are twelve sixteenth notes in each measure, showing that each sixteenth note is important individually; however, one is likely to overlook the meaning of each sixteenth note when they play the sixteenth notes in a two-count setting. In other words, one should focus on playing the sixteenth notes precisely even though they can be counted in two.

The score of *Tres Piezas* published by Ricordi does not include pedal markings. According to the interviews at Dartmouth College in 1968, Ginastera gave some information to interpret all of his piano compositions. Ginastera mentions about the pedaling: “In all of my piano music the sustaining pedal should be used, sometimes only half way down.”⁷ In other words, his interpretation emphasizes that pedaling can be changed based on the music.

⁷ Mary Ann Hanley, “The Compositions for Solo Piano by Alberto Ginastera” (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 1969), 16, accessed November 24, 2017, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

In *Cuyana*, he employs a number of chromatic scales. If one uses the sustain pedal too heavily or frequently, it not only disrupts the projection of the melodic lines but also creates a blurred sound. For this reason, it is recommended to release the pedal slowly without fully sustaining until the new base chord appears.

The image shows a musical score for 'Cuyana' by Ginastera, marked 'Allegretto (♩ = 96)'. The score is for piano and includes dynamic markings such as *pp* and *p cantando*. It features chromatic scales in both hands. Pedal markings are indicated with a 'Ped.' symbol and a triangle, with some instances labeled 'slowly off'.

Example 6. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Cuyana*, mm. 1-5

There are also exceptional passages where the pedal is not sustained. In the following passage, removing the pedal makes the music project different colors. Example 7 shows how Ginastera interrupts the melody line with repeated chords. Removing the pedal not only helps the music to have different colors with no resonance but also gives the image of a sudden break (See Example 7).

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Cuyana' by Ginastera. It consists of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 42-47 and includes markings for 'p' (piano) and 'piano'. The second system covers measures 48-53 and includes markings for 'Meno mosso' and 'molto espressivo'. The score is written for piano and includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Example 7. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Cuyana*, mm. 42-47

The dance *Cuyana* softly ends as he repeats the melody comprised of seventh chords in measure 63. The appearance of the melody at the end of the piece makes the audience recall the opening phrase. This indicates that one should reproduce this melody in the same style and musical tone as before; however, it might be difficult to play the melody in a legato manner since the right-hand has to play a triad for each chord. To provide a solution for the problem, the performer could play the two lower notes of the chords with the left-hand while the right-hand connects the single melody line. This not only helps to play the melody more comfortably but also helps in projecting a clear melodic line (See Example 8).



Example 8. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Cuyana*, mm. 63-66

Norteña

The second dance, *Norteña*, is a slow dance in ABA' form. The A section (measures 1-23) begins with accompaniment in the left-hand imitating the sound of the Caja, a native drum that was frequently found in pentatonic songs. In the right-hand, Ginastera employs a pentatonic scale which is commonly used in the music of northern Argentina.⁸



Example 9. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Norteña*, mm. 1-3

Having a four-octave arpeggio of poly chords in measure 23, Ginastera not only introduces a section with a brilliant flourish but also transitions to the harmonic characteristic of the B section. Through the movement of contrasting poly chords in both

⁸ Wylie Roy, "Argentine Folk Elements in the Solo Piano Works of Alberto Ginastera" (DMA diss., University of Texas, 1986), 67, accessed November 24, 2017, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

hands, the music gets thicker gradually with a loud dynamic to start the B section (measures 24-36) while the A sections plays the simple melody line. However, he does not continue the loud and thick texture during the B section, but instead he makes the music gradually get softer and thinner.



Example 10. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Norteña*, mm. 24-25

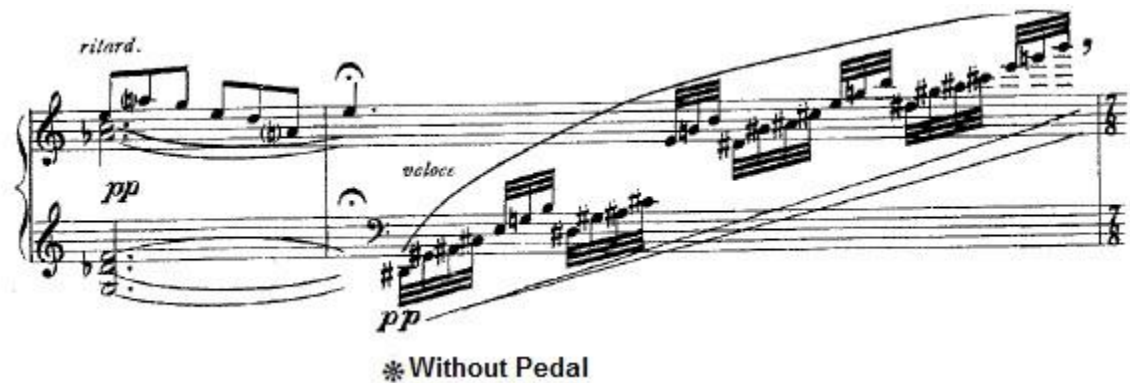
Then, naturally, the soft A section returns again in measure 37. As this reoccurs, Ginastera distinguishes between the melody part and accompaniment part in each hand to keep soft layers. It not only helps the music to have thin layers but also expresses the natural and slow disappearance of the music.

Performance Suggestions

The contrast of the moods between the A and B section of slow dance *Norteña* requires performers to have different feelings in the music. Ginastera expresses the difference by the use of contrasting musical dynamics. The overall dynamic of the A section is soft piano dynamics, while the B section expands the dynamic range from piano to fortissimo. In addition to his contrasting dynamic, the use of an additional pedal

helps to make different tone colors in music. To achieve a variety of colors, performers are able to use the una corda pedal and the damper pedal at the same time to keep a calm mood in the A section.

Right after the A section, Ginastera adds interest using two interlocking scales. For this interesting bridge, performers might think of how to perform the passage to give audiences unique impressions. For this reason, the author suggests releasing the damper pedal to change sonority in order to disrupt the prior damper pedal sonority. This projects a sudden change and implies the upcoming contrasting section.



Example 11. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Norteña*, mm. 22-23

In the B section, Ginastera emphasizes various layers using three staves. To present musical layers, the author suggests striking the bass notes similar to the percussion of an orchestra. Then, performers can fill the room with the sound of the poly chords that resonate above the bass sounds. At this time, performers should be careful not to change the damper pedal because they might lose their ringing pedal tone if they change the pedal every poly chord. To avoid losing the resonances of the bass notes, the author suggests changing the damper pedal with each new left-hand octave (See Example 12).

Example 12. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Norteña*, mm. 24-28

Criolla

Using *malambo* rhythms, *Criolla* shows Argentine dance characteristics. The musical form is a song and trio. After this energetic Creole dance, a flowing melody line comes in at measure 16. Similar to *Cuyana*, Gianstera decorates the melody line with chromatic elaboration in the dance above an arpeggiated accompaniment (See Example 13).

Example 13. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Criolla*, mm. 1-4, mm. 15-19

After the flowing melody, he adds interest with the use of sequences in fourth chords (measures 25-31) as well as the returning use of the *malambo* rhythms (measure 56) used at the beginning.

In contrast to the lively song section, the trio (measures 88-116) shows a lamenting mood in a slow tempo. According to Chase, Ginastera includes lyrical sections in many of his compositions that are based on the *criollo* folksong tradition, especially relating to the Spanish-American copla or octo-syllabic quatrain. Just as he has done in this movement, Ginastera sometimes places the lyrical section in between two dance sections, creating an ABA form.⁹ For this trio, Ginastera uses a well-known song of the lower class of Buenos Aires called the *milonga* which features the rhythm of the *habanera*. The trio starts with the following copla (verse): Dicen que los ríos crecen cuando acaba de llover; así crecen mis amores cuando no te puedo ver. (“They say that

⁹ Gilbert Chase, “Alberto Ginastera: Argentine Composer,” *The Musical Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (1957): 456.

rivers swell after it rains; thus my love swells when I cannot see you”). Ginastera creates music for the first eight measures that precisely matches the meter of this verse.¹⁰ The descending chromatic notes at the beginning of the trio depict falling rain on the river.

Muy lento
mf cantando

Di-cen que los ri-os cre-cen cuan-do aca-ba de llo-ver a -
sí cre-cen mis a - mor-es cuan-do no te pue-do ver.

Example 14. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Criolla*, mm. 88-95¹¹

The middle part (measures 98-103) of the trio continues this expression of sadness by expanding the texture using poly tonal harmonies with widely rising and falling arpeggio accompaniment. After returning to the melody of the song, the music comes back (measure 117) to the lively Creole dance again and adds a brilliant finale using glissandi.

Performance Suggestions

With a *malambo* dance introduction, Ginastera begins the final dance, *Criolla*. He repeats the dance at the beginning and ending of the trio section while having a slow lamenting section in the middle. As Ginastera emphasizes the *malambo* dance with repetitions through the entire piece, it is important to express the rhythmic characteristic of the *malambo*. To perform precise dance rhythm, the author suggests two things. First,

¹⁰ Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part I,” 20.

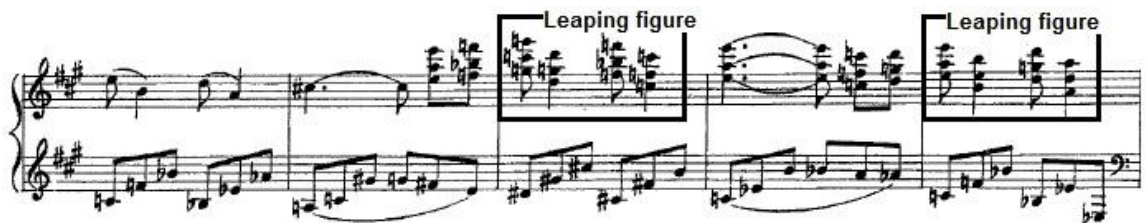
¹¹ Chase, “Alberto Ginastera: Argentine Composer,” 456.

a performer should have tenuto on the last quarter note. It not only helps in projecting the longer rhythmic value but also helps prevent rushing to the next note without holding each note to its full value. Second, one should play rolled chords quickly on the first beat. The reason for this is that slow performance of the rolled chords causes confusion in counting each beat precisely. It also makes the music sound stuck at each rolled chord. As a result, this disrupts the flow of music.



Example 15. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Criolla*, mm. 1-4

In *Criolla*, the author recommends practice suggestions for two demanding passages. Measure 145 and 147 uses leaping figures with chords. When performers play the following passage, they might be afraid of playing the next chords exactly in the fast tempo. To solve this problem, the author suggests employing a common tone as an axis.



Example 16. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Criolla*, mm. 143-147

The following example shows the leaping figures sharing one common tone between two chords. The exercise is the common tone practice with a single note. One is able to scan

the next finger position quickly while changing fingering number in common tones. After several repetitions of the exercise with the single note, one should add the remaining notes in the chord. Until one feels more comfortable, the author suggests repeating this exercise with single notes and chords in an alternating way.



Example 17. Common Tone Practice

The second demanding passage is from measures 164 to 167. Comprised of ascending tritone figures, it requires one to prepare the thumb under the tritones in the right-hand. Also, one should play the tritones crossing over the thumb in the left-hand. These finger positions in both hands may cause problems in moving on to the next note quickly. The author introduces two exercises to practice for each hand to overcome the problem.



Example 18. A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas, Criolla*, mm. 163-165

The first exercise is a practice to familiarize the interval of a tritone. By playing the next note at the same time, one is able to adjust to the distance of the interval (See Example



Example 21. Grouping Practice II

CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS OF *SUITE DE DANZAS CRIOLLAS*

While visiting the United States for his Guggenheim fellowship in 1946, Ginastera composed *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Op. 15. Revised in 1956, Barry and Co. published it, and Boosey and Hawkes handled distribution.

Considered by Ginastera as the beginning of his second style period for his piano compositions, the musical style of *Suite de Danzas Criollas* fits the description of “subjective nationalism.”¹ Concerning the suite, the composer says, “all the melodies and rhythms in the Suite are Argentine; however, this material is used in a new, personal and imaginative way, as if inspired by a folklore dream.”² *Suite de Danzas Criollas* includes five pieces: Adagietto pianissimo, Allegro rustico, Allegretto cantabile, Calmo e poetico, and Scherzando.

Adagietto pianissimo

Adagietto pianissimo is a short dance with only 33 measures. The first movement of the suite is comprised of four measure structures in G Major tonality. Although one might see the initial four measure phrase as having the harmonic progression of I-IV- b VI-I with the IV and b VI having added 7ths and 9ths as in jazz chords, this would be an unconventional progression, especially since the IV and b VI have dominant sevenths

¹ Mary Ann Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part II,” *American Music Teacher* 25, no. 1 (1975): 6.


² Ibid.

that do not function tonally. Instead of analyzing the harmonic progression, a different approach would be to consider the voice leading of the chords. Throughout the piece, Ginastera uses chromatic voice leading to move from chord to chord, specifically utilizing a half step descent. An example of this is found in measures 1 and 2 with the “B” of the G major chord in measure 1 moving to a “B-flat” in measure 2.

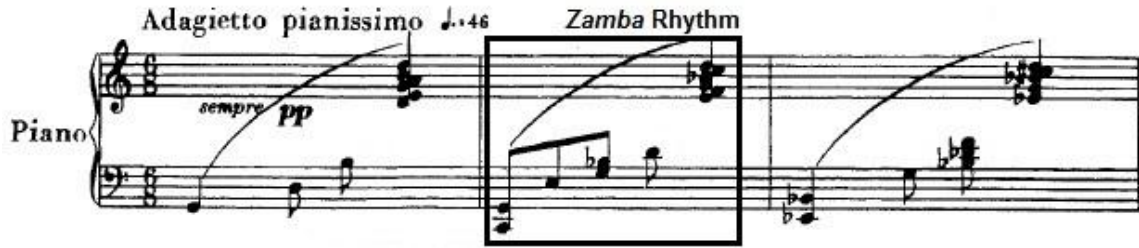


Example 22. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Adagietto pianissimo, mm. 1-3

The first (measures 1-4) and second phrases (measures 5-8) are an accompaniment-like introduction with arpeggio figuration using cluster chords. Then the melody follows at measure 9. An interesting feature is that Ginastera extended the phrases (measures 9-15 and 16-22), combining the accompanied figure that was introduced at the opening. Continuing to use the pitch of “D,” he finishes the piece with a Coda (measures 23-33) using an arpeggio made of fourths.

In *Adagietto pianissimo*, Ginastera uses *zamba* rhythm () through the movement including the use of modified *zamba* rhythms. Using a slower to moderate tempo in 6/8 time signature and performed with a handkerchief, the *zamba* dance is an intimate dance for two that originated in Peru.³ The following example shows the use of *zamba* rhythm in *Adagietto pianissimo* (See Example 23).

³ Deborah Schwartz-Kates, *Alberto Ginastera: A Research and Information Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 35.



Example 23. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Adagietto pianissimo, mm. 1-3

Performance Suggestions

Suite de Danzas Criollas was considered the beginning piece of his subjective nationalism period. As mentioned in chapter 1, the style of subjective nationalism introduces new musical elements using Argentine folk materials from melodies and rhythms.

Also, according to Deborah Schwartz-Kates, Ginastera's compositions during this second period, such as his three *Pampeanas*, frequently present a repeated pitch throughout and feature uneven rhythms, thus illustrating the style of subjective nationalism.⁴ This musical idea appears in Adagietto pianissimo with improvised accompaniment. Although the piece has a tonality of G, Ginastera chooses to emphasize the pitch of "D." In Example 24, it shows how Ginastera continuously emphasizes the same pitch of "D" through the entire suite even though he changes musical figures in each phrase (See Example 24).

⁴ Deborah Schwartz-Kates, "Alberto Ginastera," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., Stanley Sadie, 29 vols., (London: Macmillan, 2001), Volume 9:877.

Adagietto pianissimo $\text{♩} = 46$ a Repeated pitch

Piano

sempre pp

Example 24. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Adagietto pianissimo, mm. 1-10

Since Ginastera repeatedly emphasizes the pitch of “D,” it is necessary for performers to consider different colors for each “D.” By approaching the keys with varying touches of the fingers, performers can create a variety of tones and colors. For example, by pressing the key more deeply, slowly, quickly, or sharply, a performer can project different sounds for the pitch of “D.”

Additionally, since the accompaniment and melody of this dance are somewhat divided, the performer should highlight the difference of timbres between the two parts. Performers should project the melody line while playing the accompaniment more quietly.

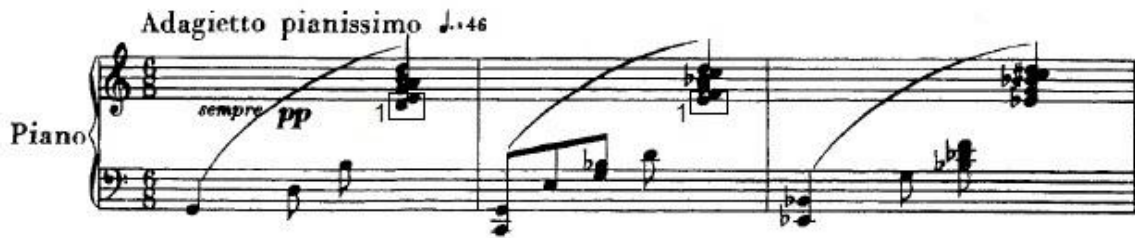
According to the score published by Boosey & Hawkes, there are a few pedal

markings in the first suite Adagietto pianissimo; however, performers can play with the sustaining pedal in each measure since each measure keeps the same harmonic qualities. For example, measure 1 includes pitches of G major, even though he adds non-chord tones such as the 2nd and 6th of G major.



Example 25. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Adagietto pianissimo, mm. 1-3

For fingerings, the cluster chords of the first and second measure include six notes. The lowest two notes of the cluster chords can be performed by the thumb of the right-hand. Playing all notes of the cluster chord with the same hand instead of dividing hands makes it easier to blend the tone colors and ensures that the notes have similar sonorities.



Example 26. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Adagietto pianissimo, mm. 1-3

Allegro rustico

Another short dance consisting of only 34 measures, Allegro rustico has an ABA'B'A'' form. This movement employs the rhythm of the *gato* (♩ ♪ ♩ ♩), a popular

nineteenth century gaucho dance⁵ while also using various registers of the piano. For example, section A features syncopated cluster chords in the right-hand in high registers of the piano while section B uses a *gato* rhythm in the middle register of the piano.

Another difference between the A and B section is that the A section features a disjunct line with multiple leaps in the left-hand while the B section features a more conjunct melodic line in the left-hand. As the piece progresses, the repeat of the B section becomes more like the A section; the chords and melody become more dense, and the rhythmic intensity increases.

Allegro rustico ♩ = 126

A

B

molto marcato

Example 27. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Allegro rustico, mm. 1-9

Performance Suggestions

According to the instructions, Ginastera suggests the cluster chords should be played with the palm of the hand. To play all white keys in an octave without missing any notes, a proper hand position based on his or her hand size is necessary. The performer

⁵ Mary Ann Hanley, "The Compositions for Solo Piano by Alberto Ginastera" (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 1969), 42, accessed November 24, 2017, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

should figure out the distance of an octave with the thumb and third finger first because the thumb plays the lower notes of an octave and the third finger as the longest finger plays the top note. Figuring out the distance makes the angle of the hand position more natural. Then the second, fourth, and fifth finger can play with the third finger, and the weight of the palm of the hand helps to play the rest of the keys. Performers should repeat the same technique for each cluster chord.

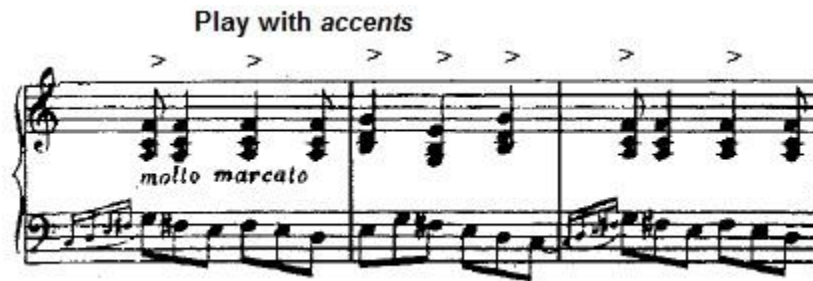
Allegro rustico 1-126

*) Ossia: *Con la palma de la mano.*
Avec la paume.
With the palm of the hand.

Example 28. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Allegro rustico, mm. 1-4

Even though Ginastera marks the meter as 6/8, this second dance establishes the metrical tension between 6/8 and 3/4. For example, in section A, the second measure fits a 6/8 meter with accent marks on beats 1 and 4 while the slur markings indicate a 3/4 meter (See Example 28). This interesting rhythmic characteristic is seen throughout the B sections using *gato* rhythm. To present his alternating metrical division of 6/8 or 3/4, playing with accents on the downbeats can help to show the difference. For example, when playing the B sections with *gato* rhythm, one can play measure 7 with 6/8 meter stressing two downbeats, but in measure 8, one can play in 3/4 meter with three downbeats even though the left-hand is still based on the 6/8 meter grouping. The

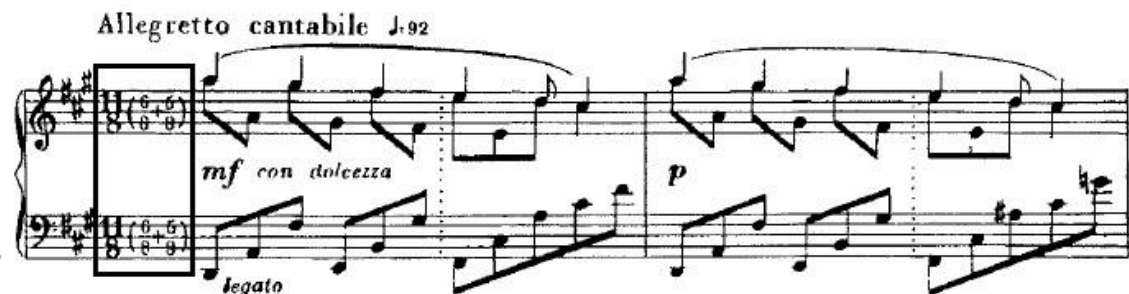
continuously alternating feeling of 6/8 and 3/4 meters make the music have metrical tension throughout the entire piece.



Example 29. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Allegro rustico, mm. 7-9

Allegretto cantabile

Allegretto cantabile is the third movement of the suite in AA'BA'' form generally using four measure structures and ending with a coda. In section A, Ginastera uses a flowing broken chord accompaniment in the left-hand while the right-hand has a stepwise descending melody with broken octaves. By creating the feel of two different meters, Ginastera is able to employ interesting rhythmic patterns dividing the meter of 11/8 into 6/8 + 5/8. For example, in the 6/8 section, Ginastera creates three groups of eighth notes in the right-hand, but the left-hand part has two groups of eighth notes.



Example 30. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Allegretto cantabile, mm. 1-2

He creates further interest in the second A section (measures 5-9). In measure 5, during the 5/8 section of the measure, the left-hand borrows the melody previously found in the right-hand (A-G#-F#-E-D-C#).



Example 31. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Allegretto cantabile, mm. 5-6

In section B (measures 10-13), Ginastera shows contrast by adding an ascending melody in the beginning of the phrase that uses a similar stepwise pattern that he employed for the descending melody in the A section.

Performance Suggestions

Ginastera uses a unique meter of 11/8 which is divided into 6/8+5/8 in Allegretto cantabile. In the 6/8 section, the music can be divided into three against two between the hands since the melodic line has three groups of eighth notes while the accompaniment part has two groups of eighth notes; however, when performers focus on the melodic line in the right-hand, they have to be careful not to accent the thumb so as not to disturb the melody. Also, to play the fourth eighth in the 6/8 section, the same downward motion is necessary in both hands which could easily result in accented notes. Performers should be aware of this and avoid accenting those notes (See Example 32).

Allegretto cantabile J.92 Be careful not to accent

mf con dolcezza *p*

legato

Example 32. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Allegretto cantabile, mm. 1-2

Allegretto cantabile begins with a legato marking. Even though some pedal can help achieve legato, over pedaling might disrupt a clear melody line. For this reason, finger legato would help produce a smooth line resulting in projecting a clear melody. For example, when the right-hand plays broken octaves throughout the movement in a descending melody line, performers can use the technique of finger substitution by replacing their fourth finger with the fifth finger while the key is still depressed.

Allegretto cantabile J.92

mf con dolcezza *p*

legato

Example 33. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Allegretto cantabile, mm. 1-2

In measure 5, Ginastera adds interest using a canonic figure with the marking *marcando il canone*. To present the canonic feature, it is important to choose an appropriate balance of voices between both hands. When the left-hand begins imitating

the melody line, performers should play this melody louder than the right-hand. This creates two layers using different dynamics. Although Ginastera marks *p* as the dynamic for the measure, for better musical balance, performers should change their right-hand dynamic from *p* to *pp* when the new canonic melody enters in the left-hand.

Calmo e poetico

Described by Ginastera as a “poetic nocturne inspired by pampas,” *Calmo e poetico* is the fourth dance of the suite.⁶ Using *zamba* rhythm and guitar chords, this dance is comprised of ABA’ form. The outer A sections are more harmonically grounded and characterized by a pedal on “A,” while the B section moves more harmonically and has a subtle emphasis on “D.” The first A section features a melody built on *zamba* rhythm in both hands in parallel motion with grace notes that decorate the first eighth note of each measure. At the end of each phrase, Ginastera creates interest by using guitar chords.

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Calmo e poetico" by Alberto Ginastera. The score is written for piano and consists of two staves. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 40 (♩ = 40). The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is divided into two measures. The first measure is marked with a dynamic of *p* and contains the text "Zamba Rhythm" with a bracket under the first eighth note of each staff. The second measure is marked with a dynamic of *più p* and contains the text "Guitar Chord" with a bracket under the first eighth note of each staff. The piece concludes with the instruction "due Pedali" (two pedals) at the bottom left.

Example 34. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, *Calmo e poetico*, mm. 1-5

Throughout this short piece, Ginastera uses open fifths and tertian and quartal

⁶ Hanley, “The Compositions for Solo Piano by Alberto Ginastera,” 45.

harmonies to establish his rhythmic motif. He even begins the piece with an open fifth in measure 1, while quartal harmonies can be found in measure 2. In the B section (measures 9-17), Ginastera continues to show a melody comprised of *zamba* rhythms through the use of parallel thirds. When he returns to the section A, Ginastera expands the open fifth of the first section A by adding additional open harmonies.

Performance Suggestions

Ginastera indicates a pedal marking of *due pedali*, which means that performers should play using the una corda pedal and damper pedal at the same time. Ginastera uses the pedal tones such as “A,” “D,” and “A-flat” throughout the fourth dance. The use of the damper pedal helps to make the pedal tones ring like a bell, while the use of the una corda changes the tone color to a dreamy mood.

Calmo e poetico 4-40

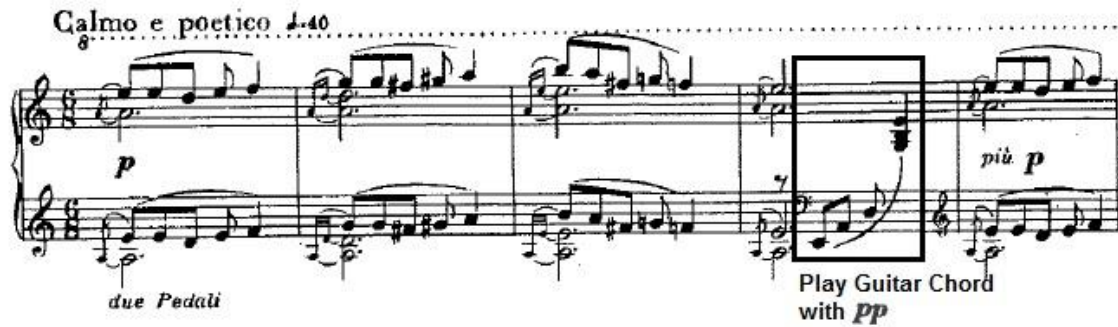
p Pedal tone "A" *più p*

due Pedali Una corda and Damper pedal

Example 35. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Calmo e poetico, mm. 1-5

Using *zamba* rhythm in the melodic line, Calmo e poetico shows the characteristics of Argentine dance by implementing guitar chords several times at the end of each phrase; however, Ginastera does not emphasize the guitar sounds through piano technique or dynamic. Rather, as he sustains the notes with dotted half notes, Ginastera

chooses to express the guitar chords in layers. As he uses the different layers, it creates the dreamy mood of this poetic nocturne. Performers should play these layered guitar chords with a *pp* dynamic, ensuring that they are softer than the melody line.



Example 36. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Calmo e poetico, mm. 1-5

Scherzando

Featuring an ABA' form, Scherzando is the fifth dance of the suite. Ginastera explains the movement as a “sort of sublimated *malambo*.”⁷ Comprised of four measure structures, the A section (measures 1-13) features the *malambo* rhythm in the right-hand and an ostinato pattern in the left-hand with *hemiola* created by the continually alternating meters of 3/4 and 6/8.



Example 37. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Scherzando, mm. 1-4

⁷ Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part II,” 6.

In the B section (measures 14-54), Ginastera varies the meter even more by adding the time signature of 7/8 into the already alternating meters. He also enhances this section with the implementation of broken chord structures in both hands.



Example 38. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Scherzando, mm. 16-19

Although section A has a harmonic quality of D minor, the B section shifts to the harmony of A Major. The harmonic relationship between D minor and A major implies a tonic-dominant relationship, referencing tonal music. At measure 24, Ginastera uses repeated open fifths and *gato* rhythm in measures 32-35 even though he marked this piece as a “sort of sublimated *malambo*.”⁸ By utilizing *gato* rhythm in the middle of this movement, Ginastera adds rhythmic contrast to the already established *malambo* rhythm (See Example 37). Since the *gato* rhythm has no accent on three, the rhythm of the *malambo* sounds more exciting when it returns. Both the use of the *gato* rhythm and the open fifths serve to prolong the harmony of A Major, which could be considered similar to dominant prolongation found in tonal music (See Example 39).

⁸ Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part II,” 6.

The image displays a musical score for Example 39, A. Ginastera, Suite de Danzas Criollas, Scherzando, mm. 24-27, mm. 30-33. The score is presented in two systems. The first system (mm. 24-27) features a piano part with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The second system (mm. 30-33) features a piano part with a dynamic marking of *f cresc.* and a boxed section labeled "Gato Rhythm".

Example 39. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Scherzando, mm. 24-27, mm. 30-33

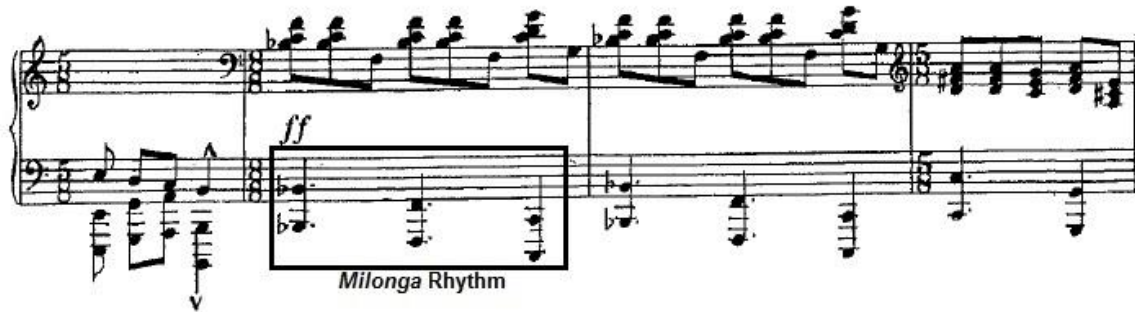
After a four-octave glissando in measure 36, the broken chord melody from measure 14 returns with additional octaves in the right-hand melody and chords in the left-hand, creating a thicker texture.

In measure 55, the repeat of the A section also gradually expands registers in both hands and concludes with a fortissimo scale like passage which leads to the fast paced “Coda.”

Coda

Marked “presto ed energico,” the 75 measure “coda” has a form of ABA'. With frequently changing meters, the A section feels rhythmically unpredictable, creating an environment of instability. It also includes harmonies built on seconds and octaves found in both hands. In the B section (measures 29-55), Ginastera prominently features the *milonga* rhythm of long-long-short. Initially belonging to the lower class of Buenos Aires,

the *milonga* was a significant dance in the development of Argentine music and was integrated with the *tango* around 1900. The *tango* and *milonga* are now commonly hyphenated and have kept the unique swinging rhythm found in the *habanera*.⁹



Example 40. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Coda, mm. 28-31

As the A section reappears in measure 56, Ginastera returns to the constantly changing meter. As Ginastera creates a feeling of agitation by using repeated notes, he concludes Coda with the modified *milonga* rhythm of long-long-short which finally results in a *ffff* D Major chord.

Performance Suggestions

For the fifth movement, Ginastera employs an energetic *malambo* dance. Gilbert Chase describes the music of Ginastera in his article “Alberto Ginastera-Portrait of an Argentine Composer.” According to Chase, Ginastera’s *malambo* dance “reflects varying moods and produces totally different effects according to how it is transformed by the composer’s creative imagination.”¹⁰ In Scherzando, *malambo* rhythm appears in a variety of musical expressions such as ostinato accompaniment, broken chord structure, imitating

⁹ Nicolas Slonimsky, *Music of Latin America* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1945), 77.

¹⁰ Gilbert Chase, “Alberto Ginastera: Portrait of an Argentine Composer,” *Tempo*, no. 44 (1957): 14.

drum sounds, and combining harmonies of octaves with seconds.

Although Ginastera's creative uses of the *malambo* rhythm throughout Scherzando contribute to a variety of moods, keeping a continuous melodic flow can be difficult for a performer, especially with his recurrent use of leaps. A performer might be tempted to have a slight pause or break in the music when approaching a big leap, but one must be careful not to disrupt the flow or excitement of the dance. Instead, it is suggested for a performer to slightly slow down when approaching a big leap to ensure accuracy of notes and continuous flow as opposed to a big pause. An example of a big leap can be found in measures 27 and 28. When preparing for the new material, a performer can maintain the flow of the music by slowing down slightly before the big leap.



Example 41. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Scherzando, mm. 25-29

In measures 55-68 directly preceding the coda, Ginastera marks that the damper pedal should be used. This means that Ginastera emphasizes the need to show different colors for this climax using the damper pedal effect. Based on the indication of the damper pedal, performers should project his interesting changes of register by striking the piano differently (See Example 42).

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. It consists of two systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system begins with a dynamic marking of *sf* (sforzando) and *f accentiato* (forte accented). It includes several measures with complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes. Pedal markings (*Ped.*) are indicated with gear symbols. A *Pall.* (rallentando) marking is also present. The second system continues the piece, featuring a *rinforzando* (rinf.) marking and further pedal indications. The notation includes various note values, rests, and articulation marks.

Example 42. A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Scherzando, mm. 55-64

Transitioning from the intense climax of Scherzando to Coda, Ginastera increases the tempo, marking the Coda as quarter note equals 176. Because of the faster speed and repeated use of octaves and seconds throughout the piece, performers must be careful not to speed up the tempo as they play.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF PIANO SONATA NO. 3

Dedicated to Barbara Nissman¹, Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 54 (1982) is Ginastera's final work. Commissioned by the University of Michigan's School of Music, Nissman performed the piece in her debut at Lincoln Center of November 17th, 1982.² According to the article "Remembering Alberto Ginastera – A Centenary Tribute" of Barbara Nissman, Ginastera originally wanted to compose a concerto for one piano and percussion for her. Due to his illness, his plan was changed to compose this short piano sonata.³

Piano Sonata No. 3

According to Ginastera, the musical form of the third piano sonata fits the following explanation: "my piano concerto evolved into the short Third Piano Sonata, Op. 55⁴, written in 1982. This sonata, his final composition, is a one-movement work, like Prokofiev's Third Sonata, but similar in form to the earlier keyboard sonatas of Scarlatti--

¹ Alberto Ginastera met pianist Barbara Nissman when she performed his First Piano Concerto as part of the University of Michigan's Contemporary Festival in 1971. After hearing her perform again in 1976, Ginastera decided that he wanted to write a work specifically for her that she would perform at her debut recital in New York City. Unfortunately, due to Ginastera's illness, the work became a one movement sonata; however, Nissman still played the sonata often at concerts around the world.

W. Stuart Pope, "The Composer-Publisher Relationship: Chronicle of a Friendship," *Latin American Music Review* 6, no. 1 (1985): 104.

² *Ibid.*, 107.

³ Barbara Nissman, "Remembering Alberto Ginastera – A Centenary Tribute," *Musical Opinion Quarterly* 1507 (April-June, 2016): 18.

⁴ Although Piano Sonata No. 3 was initially considered Op. 55, the opus number was eventually changed to 54. Ginastera had intended to write a composition for mezzo-soprano and orchestra that would have been performed by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, but his illness and death kept him from even beginning the work. Pope, 107.

in two parts with an extended, virtuosic coda. This constant toccata-like rhythm, based on Amer-Indian and colonial dances of Latin America, is reminiscent of Schumann's Toccata."⁵

The A part in Binary form (measures 1-40) shows two different elements. Comprised of a motive including descending minor thirds, each musical phrase includes the motive harmonized with sixths below.⁶ One interesting structural element is that Ginastera adds an additional descending minor third motive each time a new musical phrase begins. For example, the first phrase (measures 1-4) has three groups of motives comprised of the descending minor thirds. The second phrase (measures 5-7) then follows with four groups of the motive, and the phrase after features five motives (measures 8-10). Not only does Ginastera increase the amount of motives in each phrase, but he also increases the number of octaves. For example, the first phrase has five octave notes, the second phrase increases the number of notes to seven, and third phrase features nine (See Example 43).

⁵ Barbara Nissman, "Remembering Alberto Ginastera," July 1, 2007, accessed August 20, 2018, <https://www.barbaranissman.com/remembering-ginastera>.

⁶ Sergio De Los Cobos, "Alberto Ginastera's Three Piano Sonatas: A Reflection of the Composer and his Country" (DMA diss., Rice University, 1991), 65, accessed May 1, 2018, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

Impetuosamente $\text{♩} = 138$ (sempre $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$)

ff deciso

Increase the number of motives

Example 43. A. Ginastera, Piano Sonata No. 3, mm. 1-13

After this interesting first element, Ginastera shows contrast with a lively octave glissando. He then creates interest by employing a series of repeated notes and a descending melodic phrase broken by wide leaps in both hands (See Example 44).



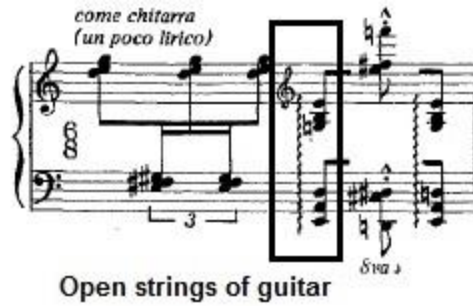
Example 44. A. Ginastera, Piano Sonata No. 3, mm. 12-13

Although the B part (measures 41-80) shares the same musical elements used in the A part, Ginastera employs a contrasting movement. For example, he utilizes ascending minor thirds as he begins with the left-hand in the B part while he uses a descending minor third motive in the right-hand at the beginning of the A part. Not only does Ginastera contrast the direction of the motives from part A to part B, but he also reverses the metric proportions. In the A section, he increases the number of motives with each repetition whereas he decreases the number of motives with each repetition in the B section. For example, the ascending minor thirds motive (measures 46-48) has the number of five. Then, it decreases to four (measures 59-60) and three (measures 75-76). Overall, Ginastera completes the symmetry with the number of motives as he begins with three to five in the A section and ends with five to three in the B section (See Example 45).

Decrease the number of motives

Example 45. A. Ginastera, Piano Sonata No. 3, mm. 46-48, mm. 59-60, mm. 75-76

In addition to the use of symmetry with the number of motives, Ginastera demonstrates the guitar chord as a symbol of Argentina as he has previously done in earlier pieces. He reproduces the guitar sounds with the pitches of the open strings of a guitar, E-A-d-g-b-e', as well as decorates the guitar sounds with cluster chords, making a percussive sound. By mixing his signature musical characteristic of guitar sound with the twentieth century technique, Ginastera continues to create new musical innovation in his music (See Example 46).

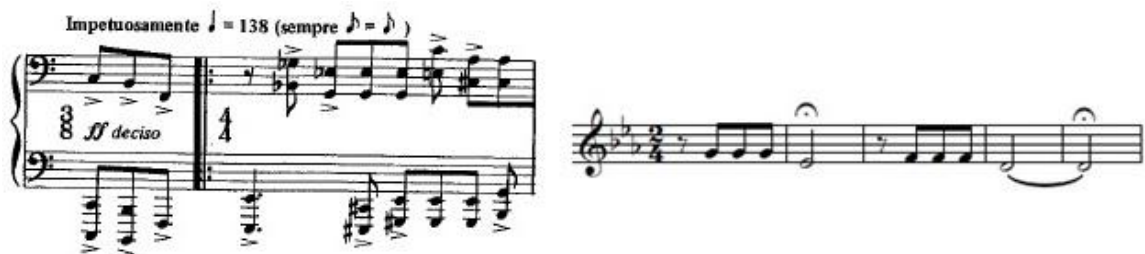


Example 46. A. Ginastera, Piano Sonata No. 3, m. 77

The coda (measures 81-113) begins with a brilliant cadenza-like passage and pentatonic scales. In the coda, Ginastera creates the climax with the guitar chords previously used in the B part in an ascending sequence. Afterwards, the finale is decorated with a gradual thickening tremolo.

Performance Suggestions

Similar to the four-note opening motive in Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, Ginastera begins Piano Sonata No. 3 with a loud four-note motive. Just like with Beethoven's theme, Ginastera uses a short-short-short-long motive. For this distinctive motive, the author suggests that the performer should begin this opening with strong accents on the four notes in a powerful fortissimo dynamic.



Example 47. A. Ginastera, Piano Sonata No. 3, mm. 1-2,

L. v. Beethoven, Symphony No. 5 motive

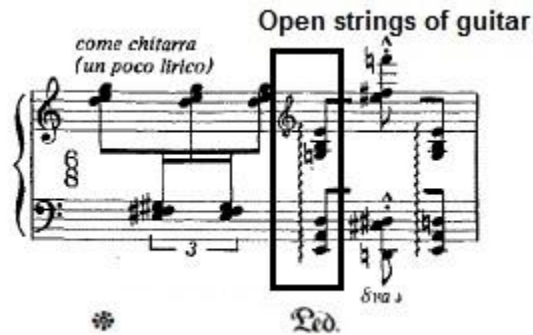
Along with using accents to emphasize the four-note motive, a performer is also able to project the motive using the sustaining damper pedal. To illustrate this, Ginastera shows a short-short-short-long rhythmic motive using three eighth-notes and a dotted quarter note in measures 13 and 14. However, since the performer must play the following leaping figure of two eighth-notes, he or she cannot hold the dotted quarter note in the rhythmic figure. The damper pedal thus assists the performer in both holding the dotted quarter note rhythmically as well as in emphasizing the longer note of the passage. Using the resonance of the pedal, the performer is able to complete the short-short-short-long motive naturally.



Example 48. A. Ginastera, Piano Sonata No. 3, mm. 13-14

Using the marking “*come chitarra (un poco lirico)*” meaning “like a guitar (a little lyrical)” in his Piano Sonata No. 3, Ginastera imitates the guitar sound using the pitches of the open guitar strings. By using different pedal sonorities, performers are able to imitate a variety of guitar styles. For example, performers can demonstrate the percussive opening motive by limiting the use of the damper pedal. The dryness and absence of resonance created by the lack of pedal can also help imitate the percussive stroking of the guitar. In contrast, one is able to produce the open strings of a guitar with

use of damper pedal resonating the pitches of a guitar, E-A-d-g-b-e’.



Example 49. A. Ginastera, Piano Sonata No. 3, m. 77

Indicating the tempo of 138 equals the quarter note, most parts in Piano Sonata No. 3 are comprised of chord structures; however, it is difficult to keep playing chords that change continuously in the fast tempo. Therefore, finding good fingerings is a great performance tip which will minimize unnecessary movement. For example, to play the following measures, one might play each chord with two fingers. However, the leap between chords makes it difficult to move quickly. To solve this problem, the author suggests a good fingering using the thumb. By using the thumb, one not only minimizes the movement from the leap but also allows a great rotating hand position.



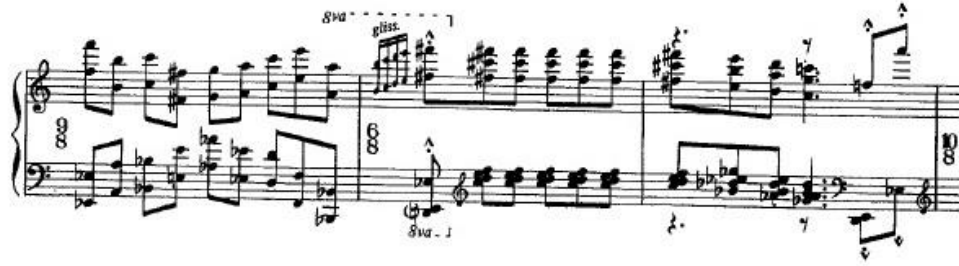
Example 50. A. Ginastera, Piano Sonata No. 3, mm. 63-66

Using several kinds of glissandi, Ginastera decorates the constant toccata like rhythm found in Piano Sonata No. 3; however, performers might experience difficulty in playing glissandi of parallel thirds and parallel octave because they are seldom played in music. According to her article, Nissman suggests playing the parallel sixths glissandi to octave glissandi; “The only request I made involved the difficult right-hand glissandi that he had written in parallel sixths. Since the piece moves at a remarkable clip, I suggested that these might be easier to play as octave glissandi, although they are still difficult to execute at this fast tempo.”⁷ Although she makes a change of glissandi, the octave glissandi passage is still a demanding spot for pianists. For this reason, the author would like to give a practice suggestion for glissandi.

Practice for Glissandi with parallel octaves

To play a glissando of parallel octaves, the author suggests practicing the top voice first before playing octaves at once. Performers should practice the top voice with the nail of the fifth finger. Also, one should find a good angle that does not hurt one’s finger. After glissando practice with the top voice, one puts the thumb lightly on the octave below and plays sliding the thumb upward. It is important for performers to keep their weight on the top voice because it helps to slide the remaining thumb smoothly, following the voice (See Example 51).

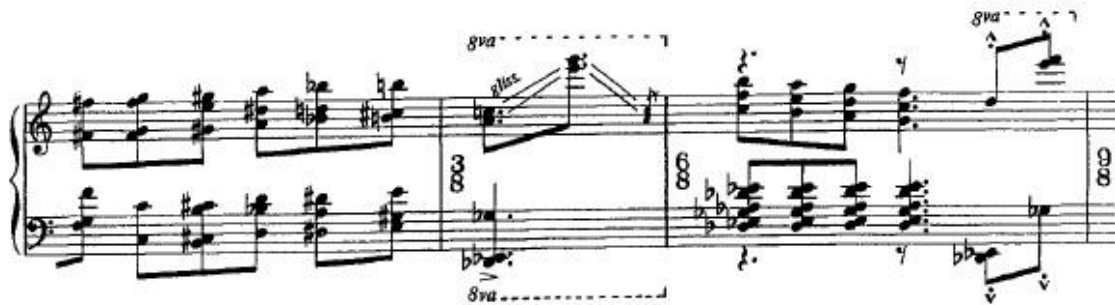
⁷ Nissman, “Remembering Alberto Ginastera,” <https://www.barbaranissman.com/remembering-ginastera>.



Example 51. A. Ginastera, Piano Sonata No. 3, mm. 11-13

Practice for Glissandi with parallel thirds

One might not be used to sliding up with the thumb and third finger as it is not common to play glissandi with those specific finger numbers. To play the glissando with parallel thirds, it is important for performers to first find a good angle that does not hurt their fingers. Also, one should figure out the depth for pressing the keys when they play glissandi. This is because the performer could skim the skin and nail if one presses the keys too deeply, causing the problem of peeling skin.



Example 52. A. Ginastera, Piano Sonata No. 3, mm. 52-54

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Alberto Ginastera was a leading composer who reflected Argentine folk music in his compositions with twentieth century compositional techniques. Composing ten piano works, his reflection of Argentine folk music is evident in his piano compositions. Even though some of his piano compositions, such as *Danzas Argentinas* and Sonata No. 1, are commonly selected for performance, other piano works are not as well-known or performed. For this reason, this study introduces three lesser known pieces for performers.

A work from his first period, *Tres Piezas* was composed in 1940. *Tres Piezas* is comprised of three different dances, and the characteristic of each dance is related to the regional title. Based on the dance rhythm of the province, Ginastera shows the influence of the melody found in Latin American songs by using the pentatonic pattern, the extension of scale, and chromatic elaboration.

Chosen as his best composition, *Suite de Danzas Criollas* (composed in 1946, revised in 1956) is considered by Ginastera the beginning of his second style period, which he describes as “all the melodies and rhythms in the Suite are Argentine; however, this material is used in a new, personal and imaginative way, as if inspired by a folklore dream.”¹ *Suite de Danzas Criollas* integrates Argentine folk materials, such as dance rhythms, with the musical techniques of the twentieth century using improvised character, chromaticism, non-chord tones, and tone clusters.

Composed in 1982, Piano Sonata No. 3 was dedicated to pianist Barbara Nissman

¹ Mary Ann Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part II,” *American Music Teacher* 25, no. 1 (1975): 6.

and was Ginastera's final composition. In Piano Sonata No. 3, Ginastera's use of twentieth century compositional techniques, such as poly chords, cluster chords, poly scales, and various types of glissandi, demonstrates the musical style of his third period. Although the third Sonata is still strongly influenced by Argentine dances, the specific Argentine dance characteristics are less prominent than in his two earlier pieces, *Tres Piezas* and *Suite de Danzas Criollas*.

With the basic musical analysis of *Tres Piezas*, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and Piano Sonata No. 3, this document provides helpful performance suggestions of fingering and pedaling based on the author's experience of from real performances. The author hopes that the document not only enables performers to interpret *Tres Piezas*, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and Piano Sonata No. 3 but also serves as a useful performance guide for many pianists.

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APPENDIX

LECTURE-RECITAL SCRIPT

Slide 1 (Title)

Good afternoon. Welcome and thank you for coming to my lecture-recital. My lecture title is “A Performance Guide for *Tres Piezas, Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and Piano Sonata No. 3 by Alberto Ginastera.” Today I will discuss *Tres Piezas, Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and Piano Sonata No. 3 from Ginastera’s three different style periods. Specifically, I will focus on Argentine musical characteristics and provide some performance suggestions.

Slide 2 (The Purpose of Study)

The purpose of my research is to provide a performance guide for *Tres Piezas, Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and Piano Sonata No. 3 by Alberto Ginastera. His piano compositions not only show Argentine folk musical characteristics but also provide the national sound of Argentina. Even though Ginastera’s works remain in various piano repertoires, certain pieces such as *Danzas Argentinas* and his first Piano Sonata are more frequently selected for performance than his other compositions. For this reason, this research will be a performance guide for less performed pieces in Ginastera’s output; specifically, the discussion of *Tres Piezas* (Three Pieces), Op. 6, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Op. 15, and Third Piano Sonata, Op. 54 will be helpful in introducing new repertoires for

pianists.

Slide 3 (Rationale)

Interest in Ginastera's music has continued and results in useful sources in the study of his music; however, many researchers are inclined to focus on analyzing his musical forms and harmonic and rhythmic characteristics based on Argentine culture. Although their studies provide insight into his compositional style and musical background, the materials have limitations in helping pianists solve the technical problems that they confront in their performances. To compensate for limitations of prior studies, this research focuses on *Tres Piezas*, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and Piano Sonata No. 3. Since *Tres Piezas* was composed in the first period, *Suite de Danzas Criollas* in the second, and Piano Sonata No. 3 in the third, they describe Argentine dances and gauchesco tradition combining musical styles and techniques from each period.

Slide 4 (Compositions)

Alberto Ginastera's compositions can be separated into three distinct style periods. Described as "objective nationalism," his first compositional style occurred from 1934-47. Compositions during this time directly use folk elements from Argentine music in a conventional tonal setting. His second style period occurred from 1947-57 and is referred to as "subjective nationalism." During these years, Ginastera still took ideas and symbols from Argentine music but presented them in a more creative and original style. His third style, the "neo-Expressionism" period from 1958-1983, incorporated more contemporary

procedures such as serialism and avant-garde techniques.¹

Slide 5 (Objective nationalism)

In his first compositional period extending from 1934 to 1947, Ginastera labels this style as portraying “an objective nationalism.”² One way Ginastera portrayed nationalism in his music during this first period was imitating the sound of the guitar as played by the gaucho, thus establishing the guitar chord as a symbol of Argentina. Ginastera employed this musical device throughout his entire musical career.³ By using the pitches of the open strings of a guitar, E-A-d-g-b-e’, he was able to not only evoke the image of the instrument and the gaucho but also employ the pitches of the Argentine minor pentatonic scale, E-G-A-B-D.⁴ **(Playing Guitar chord)**

Slide 6 (Example 1. *Malambo* Rhythm)

In addition to the use of the pitches of guitar strings, Ginastera took rhythmic elements found in the dances of Argentina. Specifically he borrows from the dance of the gauchos, the *malambo*.⁵ The *malambo* is in 6/8 meter and has a fast tempo, with rhythm patterns consisting of quickly moving eighth notes ending in a dotted quarter note.⁶

Slide 7 (Example 2. *Gato* and *Zamba* Rhythm)

The *malambo* was not the only Argentine dance that inspired Ginastera during his

¹ Deborah Schwartz-Kates, “Alberto Ginastera,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., Stanley Sadie, 29 vols., (London: Macmillan, 2001), Volume 9:876.

² Mary Ann Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part I,” *American Music Teacher* 24, no. 6 (1975): 18.

³ Mary Ann Hanley, “The Compositions for Solo Piano by Alberto Ginastera” (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 1969), 11, accessed November 24, 2017, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

⁴ Schwartz-Kates, “Alberto Ginastera,” 876.

⁵ Gilbert Chase, “Alberto Ginastera: Argentine Composer,” *The Musical Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (1957): 454.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 455.

early writing period. He was also influenced by the *zamba*, and *gato*. With a slow to moderate tempo set in a 6/8 meter, the *zamba* is a passionate dance for couples involving a handkerchief. The *gato* is one of the more popular social dances of Argentina.⁷

Slide 8 (Example 3. A. Ginastera, *Malambo*, Op. 7, mm. 1-18, Doubled Melody)

Another musical technique that Ginastera used in order to convey nationalism was the doubling of melody lines with various sonorities, specifically parallel thirds. He used this Iberian-based folk practice in his *Malambo*, Op. 7 (1940). Beginning with an eight-measure theme, Ginastera initially doubled the melody with more simple sonorities.⁸

Slide 9 (Early piano compositions)

Composed in 1937, *Danzas Argentinas* was Ginastera's first work written for piano. The success of this work not only displayed his exceptional skill for writing for piano but also solidified his standing as a prominent composer of the Argentine tradition.⁹ Using some compositional techniques of Bartok in *Danzas Argentinas*, Ginastera said about his work: "When I composed my Argentine Dances for piano in 1937, Bartok's influence with its polytonal harmonizations, strong and marked rhythms-the Bartokian 'feverish excitement'-all within a total pianism where the spirit of a national music is recreated."¹⁰ Other early piano compositions written by Ginastera include *Infantiles* (date not available), *Tres Piezas* (1940), *Malambo* (1940), and *Twelve American Preludes* (1944).

⁷ Deborah Schwartz-Kates, *Alberto Ginastera: A Research and Information Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 35.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁹ Gilbert Chase, "Alberto Ginastera: Portrait of an Argentine Composer," *Tempo*, no. 44 (1957): 12.

¹⁰ Alberto Ginastera, "Homage to Béla Bartók," *Tempo*, no. 136 (1981): 4.

Slide 10 (A. Ginastera, *Tres Piezas* (Three Pieces), Op. 6)

Written in 1940, Ginastera's piano suite *Tres Piezas* (Three Pieces) features three dances: *Cuyana*, *Norteña*, and *Criolla*. Each dance is symbolic of women from specific areas of Argentina. *Cuyana* represents a woman from the region of Cuyo, *Norteña* a woman from the North, and *Criolla* a lady with creole ancestry.¹¹

Slide 11 (*Cuyana*, Example 4. *Cuyana*, mm. 6-8, *Gato* rhythm)

The rhythmic component of *Cuyana* stems from the title, which represents the province of Cuyo. The Cuyo region features dance music, such as the *zamba* and *gato*.¹² Ginastera uses the dance rhythms of the *zamba* and *gato* in *Cuyana* reflecting this regional dance style. However, he uses a 12/16 meter for this piece, contrasting the original *gato* and *zamba* rhythm of 6/8 and making the rhythm of *Cuyana* twice as fast. For example, the original *gato* rhythm (♩ ♪ ♪) appears two times faster with shorter rhythmic values in measure 7.

Slide 12 (Example 5. *Cuyana*, mm. 37-41, *Zamba* rhythm)

Ginastera introduces *zamba* rhythms while he continues to use a melody decorated with the *gato* rhythm from the first A section. The *zamba* rhythms are twice as fast as the original *zamba* rhythm pattern (♩♩♩♩).

Slide 13 (*Norteña*, Example 6. *Norteña*, mm. 1-3)

The second dance, *Norteña*, is a slow dance. It begins with accompaniment in the

¹¹ Hanley, "The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part I," 19.

¹² Irma Ruiz, "Argentina," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., Stanley Sadie, 29 vols., (London: Macmillan, 2001), Volume 1:879-880.

left-hand imitating the sound of the Caja. The Caja is a native drum that was frequently found in pentatonic songs.¹³ I would suggest using different pedals to make different feeling in the music. The contrast of the moods between the A and B section of slow dance *Norteña* requires performers to have different feelings in the music. Ginastera expresses the difference by the use of contrasting musical dynamics. The overall dynamic of the A section is soft piano dynamics, while the B section expands the dynamic range from piano to fortissimo. In addition to contrasting dynamic, the use of an additional pedal helps to make different tone colors in music. To achieve a variety of colors, performers can use the una corda pedal and the damper pedal at the same time to keep a calm mood in the A section. **(Playing first two measures of A section)**

Slide 14 (Example 7. *Norteña*, mm. 22-23)

Right after this A section, Ginastera adds interest using two interlocking scales. For this bridge, performers might think of how to perform the passage to give audiences unique impressions. For this reason, I suggest releasing the damper pedal to change sonority in order to disrupt the prior damper pedal sonority. **(Playing)**

Slide 15 (*Criolla*, Example 8. *Criolla*, mm. 1-4)

The musical form of *Criolla* is a song and trio. Using *malambo* rhythms, *Criolla* shows Argentine dance characteristics. As I mentioned earlier, the *malambo* was an Argentine dance that inspired Ginastera during his early writing period. **(As Playing)** *Criolla* begins with *Malambo* Rhythms.

¹³ Wylie Roy, "Argentine Folk Elements in the Solo Piano Works of Alberto Ginastera" (DMA diss., University of Texas, 1986), 67, accessed November 24, 2017, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

Slide 16 (Example 9. *Criolla*, mm. 88-95, Trio verse)

According to Chase, Ginastera includes lyrical sections in many of his compositions that are based on the *criollo* folksong tradition, especially relating to the Spanish-American copla or octo-syllabic quatrain. Just as he has done in this movement, Ginastera sometimes places the lyrical section in between two dance sections, creating an ABA form.¹⁴ For this trio, Ginastera uses a well-known song of the lower class of Buenos Aires called the *milonga* which features the rhythm of the *habanera*. The trio starts with the following copla (verse): Dicen que los ríos crecen cuando acaba de llover; así crecen mis amores cuando no te puedo ver. (“They say that rivers swell after it rains; thus my love swells when I cannot see you”). Ginastera creates music for the first eight measures that precisely match the meter of this verse.¹⁵

Slide 17 (Subjective Nationalism)

Described as having “subjective nationalism,” Ginastera’s second compositional period began in 1946. During this time, Ginastera says that his music developed a greater complexity, using less simplistic form and more complicated musical techniques. Even though his compositions continued to maintain the character of Argentine music, he started experimenting with atonal language and even serialism.¹⁶ Ginastera considered his two best piano works to be *Suite de Danzas Criollas* and Sonata for piano, both which occurred during the second style period.¹⁷ *Suite de Danzas Criollas* demonstrates his new evolved style. Even though he continued to use aspects such as rhythm and melody of

¹⁴ Chase, “Alberto Ginastera: Argentine Composer,” 456.

¹⁵ Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part I,” 20.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁷ Mary Ann Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part II,” *American Music Teacher* 25, no. 1 (1975): 7.

Argentine folk music, it was less like the original materials.¹⁸ In his Sonata for piano composed in 1952, Ginastera uses the compositional technique of atonality.¹⁹ *Rondo on Argentine Children's Folk Tunes* is another piano piece composed during his second style period.

Slide 18 (A. Ginastera, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, Op. 15)

While visiting the United States for his Guggenheim fellowship in 1946, Ginastera composed *Suite de Danzas Criollas*. Considered by Ginastera as the beginning of his second style period for his piano compositions, the musical style of *Suite de Danzas Criollas* fits the description of “subjective nationalism.”²⁰ *Suite de Danzas Criollas* includes five pieces: Adagietto pianissimo, Allegro rustico, Allegretto cantabile, Calmo e poetico, and Scherzando.

Slide 19 (Adagietto pianissimo, Example 10. Adagietto pianissimo, mm. 1-10)

According to Deborah Schwartz-Kates, Ginastera's compositions during this second period, such as his three *Pampeanas*, frequently present a repeated pitch throughout and feature uneven rhythms. These are characteristics of his second style period, “subjective nationalism.”²¹ These musical ideas appear in Adagietto pianissimo with improvised accompaniment. Although the piece has a tonality of G, Ginastera chooses to emphasize the pitch of “D.” It shows how Ginastera continuously emphasizes the same pitch of “D” through the entire suite even though he changes musical figures in

¹⁸ Hanley, “The Compositions for Solo Piano by Alberto Ginastera,” 41.

¹⁹ Chase, “Alberto Ginastera: Argentine Composer,” 451.

²⁰ Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part II,” 6.

²¹ Schwartz-Kates, “Alberto Ginastera,” 877.

each phrase. **(Playing)**

Slide 20 (Allegro rustico, Example 11. Allegro rustico, mm. 1-9)

Allegro rustico is the second dance. Ginastera suggests that the cluster chords should be played with the palm of the hand. The performer should figure out the distance of an octave with the thumb and third finger first because the thumb plays the lower notes of an octave and the third finger as the longest finger plays the top note. Figuring out the distance makes the angle of the hand position more natural. Then the second, fourth, and fifth finger can play with the third finger, and the weight of the palm of the hand helps to play the rest of the keys. **(Playing the right-hand)**

Slide 21 (Allegretto cantabile, Example 12. Allegretto cantabile, mm. 1-2)

Allegretto cantabile is the third movement of the suite. By creating the feel of two different meters, Ginastera employs interesting rhythmic patterns dividing the meter of $11/8$ into $6/8 + 5/8$.

Slide 22 (Example 13. Allegretto cantabile, mm. 5-6)

He creates further interest in the second A section (measures 5-9). In measure 5, during the $5/8$ section of the measure, the left-hand borrows the melody previously found in the right-hand (A-G#-F#-E-D-C#). **(Playing canonic figure)**

Slide 23 (Calmo e poetico, Example 14. Calmo e poetico, mm. 1-5)

Described by Ginastera as a “poetic nocturne inspired by pampas,” Calmo e

poetico is the fourth dance of the suite.²² Using *zamba* rhythm in the melodic line, Calmo e poetico shows the characteristics of Argentine dance by implementing guitar chords several times at the end of each phrase. **(Playing the guitar chord)**

Slide 24 (Scherzando, Example 15. Scherzando, mm. 1-4)

Scherzando is the fifth dance of the suite. Ginastera explains the movement as a “sort of sublimated *malambo*.”²³ Comprised of four measure structures, the A section features the *malambo* rhythm in the right-hand. **(Playing first four measures)**

Slide 25 (Example 16. Scherzando, mm. 25-29)

Although Ginastera’s creative uses of the *malambo* rhythm throughout Scherzando contribute to a variety of moods, keeping a continuous melodic flow can be difficult for a performer, especially with his recurrent use of leaps. A performer might be tempted to have a slight pause or break in the music when approaching a big leap, but one must be careful not to disrupt the flow or excitement of the dance. Instead, I suggest for a performer to slightly slow down when approaching a big leap to ensure accuracy of notes and continuous flow as opposed to a big pause. An example of a big leap can be found in measures 27 and 28. When preparing for the new material, a performer can maintain the flow of the music by slowing down slightly before the big leap.

Slide 26 (Example 17. Coda, mm. 28-31)

In the Coda, Ginastera prominently features the *milonga* rhythm of long-long-

²² Hanley, “The Compositions for Solo Piano by Alberto Ginastera,” 45.

²³ Hanley, “The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera, Part II,” 6.

short. Initially belonging to the lower class of Buenos Aires, the *milonga* was a significant dance in the development of Argentine music and was integrated with the *tango* around 1900. The *tango* and *milonga* are now commonly hyphenated and have kept the unique swinging rhythm found in the *habanera*.²⁴ **(Playing *milonga* rhythm)**

Slide 27 (Neo-Expressionism)

Beginning in 1960, Ginastera's third style period, "Neo-Expressionism," features compositions with a more personal and emotional aspect. This style is more passionate and dramatic, possessing more of a mysterious poetic nature including more abstract, international, and fantastical elements.²⁵ For this third compositional period, Ginastera was heavily influenced by the composers of the Second Viennese School.²⁶ The works of Ginastera's late period are his Sonata for guitar (1976), Sonata for cello and piano (1979), the second Sonata for piano (1981), and the third Sonata for piano (1982). Although these works encompass various Argentine folk elements, they contain other musical practices that make their nationalism much less obvious than the compositions of the "objective nationalism" style period. For example, even though the second and third piano Sonatas are based on folk songs and dances of Argentina, they contain avant-garde techniques, a style that Ginastera used from 1963 to 1972.²⁷

Slide 28 (A. Ginastera, Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 54)

Dedicated to Barbara Nissman: Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 54 (1982) is Ginastera's

²⁴ Nicolas Slonimsky, *Music of Latin America* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1945), 77.

²⁵ Hanley, "The Solo Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera Part I," 18.

²⁶ Schwartz-Kates, "Alberto Ginastera," 877.

²⁷ Michelle Tabor, "Alberto Ginastera's Late Instrumental Style," *Latin American Music Review* 15, no. 1 (1994): 4.

final work. Commissioned by the University of Michigan's School of Music, Nissman performed the piece in her debut at Lincoln Center on November 17th, 1982.²⁸ According to the article "Remembering Alberto Ginastera – a centenary tribute" of Barbara Nissman, Ginastera originally wanted to compose a concerto for one piano and percussion for her. Due to his illness, his plan was changed to compose this short piano sonata.²⁹

Slide 29 (Example 18. Piano Sonata No. 3, mm. 1-13)

One interesting structural element is that Ginastera adds an additional descending minor third motive each time a new musical phrase begins. For example, the first phrase (measures 1-4) has three groups of motives comprised of the descending minor thirds. The second phrase (measures 5-7) then follows with four groups of the motive, and the phrase after features five motives (measures 8-10).

Slide 30 (Example 19. Piano Sonata No. 3, mm. 46-48, mm. 59-60, mm. 75-76)

Although the B part (measures 41-80) shares the same musical elements used in the A part, Ginastera employs a contrasting movement. For example, he utilizes ascending minor thirds as he begins with the left-hand in the B part while he uses a descending minor third motive in the right-hand at the beginning of the A part. Not only does Ginastera contrast the direction of the motives from part A to part B, but he also reverses the metric proportions. In the A section, he increases the number of motives with each repetition whereas he decreases the number of motives with each repetition in the B

²⁸ W. Stuart Pope, "The Composer-Publisher Relationship: Chronicle of a Friendship," *Latin American Music Review* 6, no. 1 (1985): 107.

²⁹ Barbara Nissman, "Remembering Alberto Ginastera – A Centenary Tribute," *Musical Opinion Quarterly* 1507 (April-June, 2016): 18.

section. For example, the ascending minor thirds motive (measures 46-48) has the number of five. Then, it decreases to four (measures 59-60) and three (measures 75-76). Overall, Ginastera completes the symmetry with the number of motives as he begins with three to five in the A section and ends with five to three in the B section.

Slide 31 (Example 20. Piano Sonata No. 3, m. 77)

In addition to the use of symmetry with the number of motives, Ginastera demonstrates the guitar chord as a symbol of Argentina as he has previously done in earlier pieces. He reproduces the guitar sounds with the pitches of the open strings of a guitar, E-A-d-g-b-e', as well as decorates the guitar sounds with cluster chords, making a percussive sound. By mixing his signature musical characteristic of guitar sound with the twentieth century technique, Ginastera continues to create new musical innovation in his music. **(Playing Guitar Chord)**

Slide 32 (Example 21. Piano Sonata No. 3, mm. 1-2, L. v. Beethoven, Symphony No. 5 motive)

Similar to the four-note opening motive in Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, Ginastera begins Piano Sonata No. 3 with a loud four-note motive. Just like with Beethoven's theme, Ginastera uses a short-short-short-long motive. For this distinctive motive, I suggest that the performer should begin this opening with strong accents on the four notes in a powerful fortissimo dynamic.

Slide 33 (Conclusion)

Alberto Ginastera was a leading composer who reflected Argentine folk music in his compositions with twentieth century compositional techniques.

A work from his first period, *Tres Piezas* was composed in 1940. Based on the dance rhythm of the province, Ginastera shows the influence of the melody found in Latin American songs by using the pentatonic pattern, the extension of scale, and chromatic elaboration.

Chosen as his best composition, *Suite de Danzas Criollas* (composed in 1946, revised in 1956) is considered by Ginastera the beginning of his second style period. *Suite de Danzas Criollas* integrates Argentine folk materials, such as dance rhythms, with the musical techniques of the twentieth century using improvised character, chromaticism, non-chord tones, and tone clusters.

Composed in 1982, Piano Sonata No. 3 was dedicated to pianist Barbara Nissman and was Ginastera's final composition. In Piano Sonata No. 3, Ginastera's use of twentieth century compositional techniques, such as poly chords, cluster chords, poly scales, and various types of glissandi, demonstrates the musical style of his third period. Although the third Sonata is still strongly influenced by Argentine dances, the specific Argentine dance characteristics are less prominent than in his two earlier pieces, *Tres Piezas* and *Suite de Danzas Criollas*.

With the basic musical analysis of *Tres Piezas*, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and Piano Sonata No. 3, this research provides helpful performance suggestions of fingering and pedaling based on my experience from real performances. I hope that the document not only enables performers to interpret *Tres Piezas*, *Suite de Danzas Criollas*, and Piano

Sonata No. 3 but also serves as a useful performance guide for many pianists.

Thank you for your attention.