

From folk culture to piano performance: a performance-oriented analysis of the influence of Argentinian folk dances in Alberto Ginastera's Suite de danzas criollas, op. 15

Alberto Ginastera is one of the most influential composers of twentieth-century Latin American music. Rooted in the Argentine musical nationalism of the beginning of the century, his output offers an outstanding example of synthesis between modernist aesthetic stances and traditional folk music. In this presentation, I will especially focus on Ginastera's piano *Suite de danzas criollas*, op. 15 (1946-1956), where *danzas criollas* ("Creole dances") directly hints at traditional Argentinian dances being a "native" component of the work. By bringing its cultural background to light, my artistic research is meant to inform contemporary performances of the Suite and aims at contributing to the development of a "hybrid" methodology that integrates awareness of traditional music practices and technical aspects of piano performance.

The presence of elements derived from Argentinian musical folklore in Ginastera's output has long been recognised. However, scholars have mostly approached the study of his work either from a purely theoretical-analytical perspective or have essentially focused on technical aspects of piano performance practice, although their considerations on interpretation do not always account for the impact of the folkloric content on the text. My research adopts an approach that combines a theoretical-analytical perspective and an investigation of Argentinian musical folklore and piano performance practices to show how embodied knowledge of the rhythmic characteristics of Argentinian folk dances can inform piano interpretation.

First, by analysing the score, I wish to illustrate how rhythmic elements from three Argentinian folk dances (the *zamba*, the *gato*, and the *malambo*) constitute a recurrent and integral part of the work. Then, I will describe my initiation into the choreographies of these Argentinian folk dances, as well as of their rhythmic patterns on the *bombo legüero*, which has offered me access to their subtleties, towards a closer feeling of their practices.

Finally, I will show how this investigation eventually aims at opening up a deeper understanding of the impact of Argentinian folklore on the musical text, providing interpretive insights into the work, and finding pianistic gestures capable of showcasing Ginastera's reworking of elements attributable to folk dances in piano performances of the *Suite*, specifically focusing on beat, accents, and timbre.



Salvatore Sclafani

Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles/Université libre de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium

salvatore.sclafani@conservatoire.be

Salvatore Sclafani (Palermo, Italy, 1991) holds a Master in Piano and a Master in Music Pedagogy from Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles (Belgium), under Eliane Reyes's mentoring. He is currently a PhD student in Arts and Arts Sciences at Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles and Université libre de Bruxelles, under the guidance of Eliane Reyes and Valérie Dufour. His research mainly focuses on the reworking of Argentinian folk dances in selected piano works by Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983) and other twentieth-century Argentinian composers.

As a pianist, Salvatore Sclafani has been awarded several prizes in international competitions such as the Premio Crescendo in Italy, the Concours "Andrée Charlier" in Belgium, and the Concours Festival - Répertoire Pianistique Moderne in France. As an artist-researcher, he has participated in conferences and

symposiums in Belgium, France, Italy, Serbia, and Georgia.

He also pursues a career as a pedagogue: he is a Piano professor at Conservatoire de Maubeuge (France) and a Piano teaching assistant at Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles.