

# **Beyond Tradition**

An Intercultural Music Notation Proposal

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## Abstract

The following text unfolds an artistic research project based on exploring creative musical notation systems that allow musicians to have intercultural collaboration without limiting their artistic identity. The overall framework of this research encapsulates contrasting elements of musical expression and notation, through diverse theoretical concepts approached by comparison, analysis, and synthesis. The project also explores the cultural significance and relevance of musical notation systems, by delving into the concept of *materialistic philosophy* by Gustavo Bueno (1924-2016), the *cultural frames* by Josep Martí (b. 1954), alternative compositional and creative processes, and different performance phenomena, shaped and enabled by performing in an intercultural music setup.

The purpose of this research is twofold: Examine the creative process within an intercultural context, and the fostering of mutual understanding and differences when performing in an intercultural setup. To achieve these aims, two case studies were developed. The first case is based on an auto-ethnographic analysis made during a field trip to different regions of Colombia in the summer 2023. The focus was on gaining an understanding the currently used musical notations applied to Colombian traditional music practices. The second case study refers to the main characteristics of multiple musical notation systems, composition techniques, and creative processes used as tools in an effort to better develop intercultural communication when performing in an ensemble setup. Finally, these case studies contributed to the composition and notation-exploration process manifested at my final master's concert "Beyond Tradition," presented on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at the Helsinki Music Centre, Camerata Hall, Helsinki – Finland.

The main findings of this artistic research lie in the discovery of ways to utilize music notations systems that do not limit the performer's cultural frame or artistic identity and enhance the possibility for intercultural communication with shared ownership when creating/arranging written compositions.

## Keywords:

Philosophical Materialism, Intercultural Music, Cultural Frames, Western Music Notation Systems, Alternative Compositional Processes, Alternative Creative Processes, Improvisation, Comprovisation, Notation-explorations.

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*This work is dedicated to:*

*My wife Pilar Zorro and our expected baby that will light  
our future for the rest of our lives.*

*As well as...*

*The Llanera Harp, my gratitude and respect.*



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## Chapter 1: Preamble / Preámbulo

### 1. Introduction

This research presents an alternative to an intercultural musical notation proposal by implementing Western musical composition techniques and notation systems for intercultural artistic collaboration as of the perspective place-specific practices and/or a participants' artistic creation. From my artistic point of view and personal background, the main reference has been associated with the diversity of traditional Colombian music. As a result, one can evaluate creation practices, supported by structural musical concepts such as *musical-facilitator* (Perks, 2021), literacy knowledge, *cultural frames* (Martí, 2002), thus generating a proposal of an intercultural musical notation adjustable to other traditional music contexts, musical systems, and purposes.

This work moves between artistic practice-based and auto-ethnographic research, among quantitative and *modus operandi* methods (Yip, 2020) presented in chapter 1. The core of this research was established by the connection between philosophy and the importance of adopting pluralistic approaches to concepts and methodologies. Also, the *materialistic philosophy* of Gustavo Bueno (1924-2016), was used as a pivotal point and influence for the research angle and the conceptual framework of this project.

The first case study presented in this text was developed through a field trip to different regions of Colombia in the summer 2023, where I observed and analyzed the multiplicity of phenomena and conceptual knowledge around the act of performing and its context from the performers and the perspective of the audience. This field trip reinforced the existence of a strict framework for music notation systems used in Colombian traditional music, which you are not encouraged to challenge, and oral tradition is the main source of repertoire. This creates a division between performers that have knowledge and training in the use of Western music notation systems and those who do not. These findings contributed to a deeper understanding of the intersection between music performance and music notation. Consequently, it became the source of inspiration of the second case study: compose contrasting notated musical works with the intent of proposing an intercultural communication through a new approach of Western musical notation systems adjusted to

traditional music, musicians from diverse backgrounds, and contemporary compositional ideas. The processes used for these case studies are exposed in chapter 2.

As a result of the case studies, “*Beyond Tradition*” master’s concert was created as practice-based research to foster a musical collaboration between musicians of different parts of the world to perform beyond their cultural backgrounds, without limiting their artistic identity. In chapter 3 the development of the musical pieces as well as the creative approach used during rehearsals are unraveled and analyzed.

Chapter 4 displays an examination of the practice-based research results and the challenges encountered throughout the process. Finally, reflective analysis of this intercultural music notation proposal drives the discourse forward, stimulating further inquiry into this subject matter.

### **1.1 Research Aim and Question**

The research question addressed is designed to elucidate the underlying concepts of the proposed case studies and experimental artistic practice, aimed at refining the concept of musical notation applied towards intercultural music collaboration. Each case study is intricately linked to the question, with the cumulative findings contributing to the overarching conceptual research framework.

The research question is:

- *How can Western musical notation systems and composition techniques be used to facilitate an intercultural musical collaboration based on a Colombian music framework?*

In the context of this research, the question was primarily used to establish the corresponding framework as a guide to the fieldwork research in Colombia. Following the field trip, conclusions provided possible alternatives to formulating multiple music notation systems applied to the creative artistic process presented in the master concert recital.

The question merged not only from the current process of this investigation but from the constant artistic exploration throughout my musical experiences related to the

performance of traditional music instruments of Colombia and my academic studies in Colombia, United States, and Finland.

## **1.2 Context of Study**

The artistic research I established is primarily focused on the study of interculturality as a fundamental axis in artistic musical development. From this perspective, the context is based on the contrast between two moments. The first was based on the cultural immersion in Colombia, and the second was established within the Global Music Department at the Sibelius Academy Uniarts and the artistic practices in Helsinki, Finland. The purpose of incorporating these two contrasting places was to explore various musical and conceptual diversities by immersing and exposing myself to them. These diversities were crucial and served as significant contributors to this research.

The context of Colombian culture, according to the current definition by the Colombian Ministry of Culture, is no longer viewed as hegemonic and vertical but rather as a pluri-cultural, pluri-ethnic, and multilingual reality (Políticas Culturales, n.d.). Its traditional music reflects the contrasts of a complex rich history and particular experiences that each Colombian region has experienced (Politica Artes, n.d.).

The field trip to Colombia had two complementary objectives. The first goal was to visit various regions of the country that I knew about, to actively take part in artistic activities. The second objective was to explore places as an observer where I had less exposure to their artistic practices during my auto-ethnographic journey. These emic and etic approaches in Colombia are unfolded in detail in the chapter 3.

On the other hand, the Global Music Department from the Sibelius Academy, Uniarts Helsinki, Finland, offers an environment where ‘students from both musically and culturally diverse backgrounds are immersed’ (Global Music, Bachelor and Master | Uniarts Helsinki, 2024). My relationship with most of the performers involved in the master concert recital had been as classmate and collaborator in multiple ensembles, courses and other performances. All these experiences formed strong relationships that were crucial in the research. Also, my active participation in the local musical scene in Helsinki since the year 2022, allowed me to comprehend the importance of initiating a study of this nature and the positive impact on the local community.

### 1.3 Research Design and Methods

The purpose of this section is to present the research methods employed throughout the various stages of this investigation and their specific application. The connection between philosophy and the significant importance of adopting a pluralistic approach to concepts and methodologies was a key element in my research. The philosophical concept that caught my attention as a potential exploration in the design of the research was presented by Spanish philosopher Gustavo Bueno (1924-2016) through his analysis of Plato's concept of '*simplexe*' concerning the establishment of the ontological foundation to the *materialistic philosophy*. According to Gustavo Bueno, "(...) nothing is isolated from everything else, but not everything is connected to everything else; otherwise, nothing could be known." (Gustavo Bueno, n.d.-b). Resembling this philosophical concept, I found that methodological pluralism could have a strong resemblance with Knox's (2004) argument, where methods are not selected necessarily by theory, but instead they have 'elective affinity' between both.

This elective affinity enables one to see that, although one's ontological ideas do in fact favor or lend themselves to specific techniques, these ideas also allow one to choose the most appropriate strategies for a given research project between the many options accessible (Knox, 2004). Accordingly, one can argue for multiple methodologies to be implemented in research towards a pluralistic approach and its veracity. In fact, Easterby-Smith et al. (2015) present the argument put up by proponents that, researchers may enhance the validity, generalizability, and theoretical contribution of the results by utilizing a variety of methodologies within the same study; detractors point out practical issues such as the researchers' skill in performing various procedures and potential inconsistencies between the paradigms supporting various approaches. Understanding the argument, I could debate that as a musician, one is exposed to multiplicity of *cultural frames* (Martí, 2002) that are constantly evolving in the development of artistic processes. The validity of the strategies or methods used in research is largely supported by artistic decisions aimed at knowledge construction and inclinations towards pluralistic approaches that present a strong rationale on such research.

The core of my study is grounded in the principles of artistic research. To create new discourse and argumentation modes, investigation methodologies, and artifacts, this concept opens the prospect of a fruitful interplay between differing ways of thinking, engaging, and experiencing (Hughes, 2014). Within the lines of artistic research, practice-based research is



involved. Therefore, experiential components are crucial in the establishment of artistic practices and experiential feelings are representations of experiential content (Biggs, 2004).

In addition, auto-ethnography is a type of qualitative research where an author uses writing and self-reflection to explore anecdotal and personal experience to connect this autobiographical story to broader cultural, political, and social meanings and understandings (Badley, 2022). In this research, my auto-ethnographic perspective is seen from the position of researcher, *musical-facilitator* (Perks, 2021), and performer. On the other hand, the auto-ethnographic perspectives of the participants were observed through their collaboration process and at the master's concert recital.

Following the arguments presented, points of convergence and divergence are constant, which does not determine a definitive distinction between auto-ethnographic and practice-based aspects. This same practice must also be considered not only in what focuses on my interpretation but in the multiple interpretations and auto-ethnographies of each participant within the framework of the master's concert recital performance.

The entirety of the constant auto-ethnographic variations of each participant is what largely contributes to the foundation of this research. However, it is worth noting that the complexity of this approach should be open to discussion, and I hope that throughout the process of this research, this response can be supplemented and expanded upon in future investigations.

### 1.3.1 Methodology

This section presents the methodologies used to encompass the concepts of quantitative methods and methodological *modus operandi of reduction and prejudice* (Yip, 2020) implemented to this artistic research.

Before getting into the methodological analysis, recalling the research question is crucial to unfold the methods implemented:

- *How can Western musical notation systems and composition techniques be used to facilitate an intercultural musical collaboration based on a Colombian music framework?*

To design an adequate methodology for this question, it is worth establishing the connection of music as a qualitative method, where aspects of music can be conceptualized and applied to three major aspects of qualitative research: perception, conceptualization and communication (Leavy, 2015). In this sense, music in artistic-based research can be used as a method where content analysis and intervention can generate effects to the ‘listening’ and ‘making music’ for audiences and creators. (Leavy, 2015).

From that angle, continuing with the pluralistic notion mentioned in the research design, the role of questions in artistic-based practices are seen not from a singular point of view or a singular answer to the question, but from multiple interpretations and levels of understanding, where art knowledge cannot be perceived as a singular method of research (Yip, 2020). According to Yip, artistic practices can unfold processes that develop research (Fig. 1).

- 
- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| • To annotate                       | • To install                                    |
| • To think; to reflect              | • To interact; interaction                      |
| • To form; to arrange               | • To work collectively                          |
| • To improvise                      | • To concert                                    |
| • To set in scene                   | • To note                                       |
| • To compose                        | • To publish                                    |
| • To model                          | • To research ( <i>recherchieren</i> in German) |
| • To practice                       | • To sing                                       |
| • Recherché-creation                | • To translate                                  |
| • To work serially                  | • To exhibit                                    |
| • To exhibit                        | • To experiment                                 |
| • To diagram; diagrammatic practice | • To design                                     |

Figure 1. Possible Practices in Artistic Research (Yip, 2022)

I found methodological *modus operandi of reduction and prejudice* presented by Yip (2022) useful to the core of this artistic research. *Reduction* can be perceived as a filter to unwanted perception and knowledge from the phenomena. *Prejudice* can be approached as recognizing experiences as knowledge based on the pre-understanding (Yip, 2022). As a result, I consider these methodological approaches as a strong match to the research, where objective outcome can be achieved within the complexities of artistic practices.

The working methods and strategies developed for this research are:

- Personal immersion in contrasting cultural spaces as a way to obtain a deeper understanding of the cultures, during both the Colombian field trip and experiences throughout the research in Finland.

- Fostering collaboration between musicians of diverse backgrounds through the creation of structural and conceptual strategies applied to artistic practices.
- Experimenting with a wide conceptual framework to build new knowledge in intercultural music.

### **1.3.2 Data Generation**

The data collected throughout the research included audio and video recording of the work in progress during the exploration, creation and collaboration process. This included audio voice memos and partial video captures with an iPhone 13 mini. In addition, video recording of the performance outcome was developed to reflect and correlate the analysis of the experiential and experimental processes derived from the artistic practice.

Audio recordings of the rehearsals were utilized as a way for both myself and collaborators to remember the specific nuances of the pieces developed. After each rehearsal had unfolded, audio material was sent to the participants, as reference for their own practice in preparation for the final performance.

Formal and informal conversations were carried out during the research. This includes interviews, surveys, emails, personal chats and text messages, as well as informal meetings to discuss, observe, and analyze the subject matter.

In a similar way, personal voice memos were recorded as a way of reminding the research journey as well as providing material to be analyzed in a constructive manner. This method was implemented as an easy approach to capture the moments with its unique sounds of the context in place.

The artistic process also included crafting and designing multiple notation systems. Firstly, using a hand method scoring in a personal music staff paper to then be transcribed to a musical notation software. Through the notation system development, the interaction between physical and digital recreation of ideas and concepts was constantly modified until a middle ground was founded, based on the questions and constant feedback from participants through informal conversations.

### **1.3.3 Data Analysis**

The data outcome from this research was analyzed constructively, using a critical and reflective analysis on each step of the process. This analysis was an integral part of the research, while keeping in mind that all the data was intrinsically connected with pluralistic research and methods. The analysis of the data was observed and processed, especially through constant discussions with the concert supervisor of the master's concert recital. Conclusions from conversations were constantly considered for modifications of the process due to the positive results observed after the received advice.

Throughout the stages of the research, the analysis of the methods used to generate the data were approached and decoded thoughtfully throughout the process, and by constant reminders. The use of voice memos reflected on this research a positive outcome.

On the other hand, the data collected through surveys were analyzed to observe common and divergent opinions between the performers. Due to the nature and timeline of the surveys, the data was obtained in two stages. The first stage was prior to the concert preparation, with the intention of generating an outline of the collaborators' perspectives, skills and interests, trying to assign the most suitable role. The second stage took place after the master's concert recital. This data was implemented as a collection of reflective analysis of the collaborators' experience, intending to understand if the processes developed throughout the concert preparation were useful towards the conclusion of this research.

### **1.3.4 Ethics**

The contributors to this project willingly agreed to be involved and consented to be acknowledged for their artistic inputs in a voluntary manner. Forms are in the position of the researcher, and examples of which can be found in the appendices. Throughout the research process the "Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity" and "Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland" were followed as well as the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity in sections of "basic principles of research integrity", "research procedures", "safeguards", "data practices and management", "collaborative working", and "publication" (TENK, 2023). Each contributor provided a signed consent prior to the collection of data. Data is safe both physical and virtual in the form of PDF files saved in dedicated NAS storage.

It is worth mentioning that the integrity of myself as a researcher and all participants throughout the process was always an important factor. Also, the understanding of different perspectives and opinions was continuously acknowledged and respected. Anonymity and confidentiality were carefully considered at every stage of this research. These fundamental principles were implemented to uphold ethical standards and cultivate trust between the researcher and participants, thereby fostering an environment conducive to open communication and meaningful contributions to the study.



Image 2. Violins on stage before performance. Photo by Maarit Kytöharju, Global Fest, Helsinki – Finland, 2023.

## Chapter 2: Time & Space / Tiempo & Espacio

### 2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

In this section the theoretical concepts used as a core framework for the research are presented. The correlation of *materialist philosophy* of Gustavo Bueno and the term *cultural frames* (Martí, 2002), are crucial as a departure point.

The *materialistic philosophy* of Gustavo Bueno and his definition of music philosophy can be understood as a confrontation of diverse musical ideas that maintain a commonality. However, musical ideas and concepts are permeated by other categories or fields (Chuliá, 2020). While maintaining the argument, I could find that music in all its senses, can be related to a multiplicity of concepts that may or may not have a correlation. In fact, depending on the discourse of the concept and the intrinsic correlation within, or built in, this could be a fundamental axis to the definition of a musical philosophy that provokes plurality at its core.

*Materialistic philosophy* holds the term of *general ontological matter* (Chuliá, 2020. Translation by the author)<sup>1</sup> that refers to a ‘world’ with pluralisms. This world is “(...) conformed by three genres of materiality” (Chuliá, 2020. Translation by the author)<sup>2</sup>. The genres are: ‘Matter of first genre’ (M1) as universal entities in space and time, ‘Matter of second genre’ (M2), to the operations in a context and experiences both from outside and inside, and ‘Matter of third genre’ (M3), that refers to concepts and structures. The result of the totality of interactions between these categories can be defined as *transcendental ego* (Chuliá, 2022. Translation by the author)<sup>3</sup>.

This philosophical approach completely caught my attention to the definitions of structural frameworks. In the creative process of this research, I am questioning myself on how to propose a composition in which the totality of the piece has into account not only the score in used (M1), but the role of the performers and its interactions in a context (M2), and the conceptual aspects and literacy knowledge implemented (M3). My vision is that the totality of these interactions, sometimes in synchrony and sometimes not, could provoke a

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<sup>1</sup> *Materia Ontológico General.*

<sup>2</sup> “(...) conformado por tres géneros de materialidad”

<sup>3</sup> *Ego Transcendental.*

piece with more powerful artistic impact that at some point could transcend in a timeline frame.

An intrinsic relationship with the last concept mentioned above is raised around the notion of *cultural frames*, composed of a variety of interconnected facts and elements (Martí, 2002). According to Martí: “(...) The sum of all these participations in the different cultural frames that constitute the person's vital space will constitute their cultural definition”. From this perspective, a musician builds its cultural definition by the context and experiences in which it has been exposed. Different people cannot have the same definition of culture, and one could negotiate the definition of culture strongly related with the affinity of the cultural frame that one is exposed to (Martí, 2022).

If we want to correlate this notion with the scope of this research, I can argue that my *cultural musical frame* is continually evolving through the lens of shared auto-ethnographic experiences, as well as in the case of the other participants in this project. At the same time, we may have affinities of shared experiences due to our artistic collaboration, but our definitions in music are not going to necessarily be the same.

I find strong similarities as well as divergent points between the *materialistic philosophy* and *cultural frames*. But I believe that adopting this approach as the core of the conceptual structure and creative framework can significantly enhance the integration of this concept into the development of intercultural music performance.

Building on this idea, my travels to Colombia provided a unique opportunity to compare and analyze contrasting *cultural musical frames* through direct observations and experiences. This deepened my understanding of the country's cultural complexities and sparked inspiration regarding intercultural possibilities, specifically in the realm of music. The concept of intercultural music that I have explored in this research delves into the interactions between the diverse *cultural frames* I observed in Colombia and those of the Global Music department students. This approach allowed me to juxtapose my firsthand insights of the country with the varied cultural perspectives of the students, enriching our collective understanding of intercultural music creation.

From the music notation aspect, I wanted to question and propose a framework using my music knowledge standpoint, strongly supported by my perception of reality, and influenced by my own cultural frame and auto-ethnography. However, this does not mean that the intercultural music notation must be set up only as of the position of this research. On the contrary, my invitation is to create the awareness of how this conceptual framework

can be adjustable depending on the *cultural frame* and knowledge foundation of any *musical-facilitator* (Perks, 2021).

## 2.1 Literature Review

Here I would like to present the literature used at different stages of this research.

The case study by Richard Perks, titled **"Strung Together: Realizing Music-cultural Hybridity within a Limited Time Frame"** (Perks, 2021), intended to investigate the various forms of music-cultural hybridity that could arise from cross-cultural improvisational cooperation. At the same time, this case study was mainly focused on the use of improvisation and co-composition based on the backbone 'skeletal musical score' (Perks, 2021). Jacqueline Walduck: **"Role-taking in free improvisation and collaborative composition"** defines some of the terminology related to skeletal music score that leaves room for other parts and ideas (Walduck, 1997). In a similar approach, the book **"Improvisation: its Nature and Practice in Music"** (Bailey, 1992) reveals the distinctive nuances of improvisation as well as the processes of composers in improvisation through detailed conversations with musicians in practice, in which I especially focus on the work of Earle Brown. Likewise, the concept of improvisation and composition of Earle Brown, in the article **"Between mobility and stability: Earle Brown's Compositional Process"** (Dubinets, 2007), offers a deeper understanding of the composition techniques implied on graphic scores, and the approach of aleatory and indeterminacy music.

**"Comprovisation – Concepts and Techniques"** (Bhagwati, 2013a) in the book **"(Re) Thinking Improvisation: Artistic Exploration and conceptual Writing"** (Frisk & Östersjö, 2013) describes the generalities of 'Comprovisation'. Its architecture and notation system influences some of the composition frameworks of this artistic research.

On the other hand, it is noticeable the work of Vicente Chuliá and the book **'Philosophical Treatise of Music'** (Chuliá, 2022. Translation by the author)<sup>4</sup>. Chuliá describes the philosophy of Gustavo Bueno and its application to Music in detail. Even though the approach of this book is closely related to Western classical music, my intention was to understand the generalities of this work to then reconceptualize it towards the application of my work. In addition, the article **'Music, Philosophy and Art in the**

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<sup>4</sup> 'Tratado de la Filosofía de la Música'.



**Materialism of Gustavo Bueno'** (Chuliá, 2020. Translation by the author)<sup>5</sup>, served as a complementary text to further understand the philosophy above mentioned.

In contrast, the following works were analyzed for a wider understanding of both the musical practices context and studies of musical notations in relation to the traditional Colombian music. All works were co-published by the Colombian Ministry of Culture, 'National Music Plan for the Coexistence, National Program of Popular Music' (Translation by the author)<sup>6</sup> and authors: **Beginner's Guide to Music: "Whistles and Drums"** (Valencia, 2004. Translation by the author)<sup>7</sup>, **Beginner's Guide to Andean Music, Central-Eastern Region: "Long Live the Players"** (Franco et al, 2008. Translation by the author)<sup>8</sup>, **Beginner's Guide to South Pacific Music: "What's Up with You!!!"** (Duque et al, 2009. Translation by the author)<sup>9</sup>, **Beginner's Guide to Southwest Andean Music: "School of Flutes and Drums"** (Romero et al. 2011. Translation by the author)<sup>10</sup>.

**'Regional Colombian Music. Dynamics, Practices and Perspectives.'** (Nueva Cultura, 2007. Translation by the author)<sup>11</sup>, was actively used in my fieldtrip to Colombia as a guide to contrast with other sources encountered, such as conversations and observations. It amplifies an important awareness of how to rethink the traditional Colombian music related to the multiple phenomena in the socio-cultural and musical aspects.

Finally, the works **'The Cultural Frames Approach as an Alternative View to the Ethnocratic Idea of Culture'** (Martí, 2002), and **'The musical Cultures seen through the Cultural Frames Perspective'** (Martí, 2002), presented the complexities among *cultural frames* and how to evaluate them from a musical angle.

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<sup>5</sup> 'Música, Filosofía y Arte en el Materialismo de Gustavo Bueno'.

<sup>6</sup> Ministerio de Cultura de Colombia, 'Plan Nacional de Música para la Convivencia, Programa Nacional de Músicas Populares'.

<sup>7</sup> Cartilla de Iniciación Musical "Pitos y Tambores"

<sup>8</sup> Cartilla de Iniciación Musical Músicas Andina Centro Oriente "Viva Quien Toca"

<sup>9</sup> Cartilla de Iniciación Musical Pacífico sur: "Que te Pasa Vo !!!"

<sup>10</sup> Cartilla de Iniciación Musical Andina Suroccidente "Escuela de Flautas y Tambores"

<sup>11</sup> Músicas Regionales Colombianas. Dinámicas, prácticas y perspectivas.



Image 3. Nicolás Castañeda Lozano performing. Photo by Maarit Kytöharju, Global Fest, Helsinki – Finland, 2023.



Image 4. Nicolás Castañeda Lozano performing. Photo by Maarit Kytöharju, Global Fest, Helsinki – Finland, 2023.

## 2.2 Researcher Position

The following section describes my background and position in relation to this research. It explores the various moments of my artistic practice that have contributed to the development of this investigation.

Born in the city of Bogotá, Colombia, I was deeply influenced by music from a very young age. Initially, I learned music by oral tradition exploring various percussion instruments of Colombian music. I pursued my passion as a traditional Colombian music clarinetist under the mentorship of Narcor Gárces, saxophonist, clarinetist and ex-director of the renowned Lucho Bermúdez Orchestra (Translation by the author)<sup>12</sup>. Additionally, I studied with *Llanera* Harpist Hildo Ariel Aguirre, at the Llano y Joropo Academy (Translation by the author).<sup>13</sup>

La Camoruca, as it is commonly called the *Llanera* Harp (traditional Colombian - Venezuelan harp) in the ‘Llanos’ or plains of the Orinoco region of Colombia and Venezuela, particularly in the traditional genre of ‘llanera music’ (Translation by the author)<sup>14</sup>. I was significantly recognized at a young age and was a prize winner at the International Joropo Competition (Translation by the author)<sup>15</sup> in Villavicencio, Colombia. The *Llanera* Harp, is a versatile 32 nylon string instrument that has a lead role in the ‘llanera’ genre. This instrument's role is characterized by performing complex melodies and polyrhythmic patterns that serve as an accompaniment role for singers, dancers, and llanera music ensembles. Its technical performance is accompanied by constant on time composition and musical variations based on improvisational discourses with the instruments used in this genre: Cuatro, Maracas, Bandola and Bass.

My artistry is the result of a blend of tradition with academia. At the academia, my initial quest was to comprehend Western musical theory and notation, with the intention to apply a wide variety of these concepts into my performance and creation process based on traditional Colombian music. This formal music training started in 2007 at the Superior Academy of Arts in Bogotá – ASAB, District University Francisco José de Caldas (Translation by the author)<sup>16</sup> where I studied classical composition and arrangements. In

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<sup>12</sup> Orquesta de Lucho Bermúdez.

<sup>13</sup> Academia Llano y Joropo.

<sup>14</sup> Música Llanera.

<sup>15</sup> Torneo Internacional del Joropo.

<sup>16</sup> Academia Superior de Artes de Bogotá, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas.

2016, I finished my studies at Berklee College of Music in Boston – Massachusetts, United States, where I majored in music with emphasis in Jazz Composition.

Since my arrival to Boston, I have had an important relationship with improvisation beyond the traditional Colombian music context. While being a student at Berklee and collaborating at the New England Conservatory, I constantly performed and studied with important musicians of Latin Jazz, Free Jazz, Free Improvisation and Contemporary Improvisation genres.

These multiple explorations led me to discover a point of equilibrium between musical composition and improvisation in my performance. This has been my constant pursuit as the development of my personal artistry. However, due to my educational processes and musical experience in both oral tradition settings and formal music studies, I have encountered numerous unique moments of discovery and adaptation to various scenarios, which have fueled my passion for continuing to expand my *cultural musical frame*. This pursuit has never ceased, and it was the reason for coming to study at the Global Music department in 2022. During the last two years, I have explored contrasting traditional musical expressions of different parts of the world and experimental music.

My approach to this artistic research reflects the multiple cultural frames I have been adjusted to and transformed into during my 20 years of artistic career. The result of these experiences has cultivated a perception of artistic creation from various angles, that in turn allows me to understand the musical contrasts mentioned above. This allowed me a significant openness to each participant's multiple perspectives and musical knowledge.

The position in this research, regarding the exploration of musical notation systems, arose from my interest in understanding the musical landscape of Colombia, and realizing the need of developing a strategy that allows musical collaboration and communication between diverse traditional music genres.

### 2.2.1 Case 1 - Field Trip: Colombia 2023

In this section, I will detail the first case study, based on my journey to Colombia in the summer of 2023. I traveled to various culturally contrasting areas to observe from both emic and etic perspectives, which were constantly fluctuating throughout the journey.

The primary objective of the fieldwork was to gather information from the qualitative research angle on potential established musical notations as well as that of observing the complexities and the performance of the diverse styles of traditional Colombian music.

The initial travel plan to different areas of the country considered the multiple circumstances that could affect completely such established plan, including but not limited to time schedules, accessibility to information and security. This is a reality of Colombia worth mentioning. However, during the whole field trip, I managed to overcome many of these aspects even though it required continuous adaptation.

The trip began in the town of Ginebra, Cauca Valley. I was looking forward to “El Mono Nuñez” Festival, one of the most renowned Andean traditional music festivals in Colombia and Hispanic America. This festival’s main genres of focus are *pasillos*<sup>17</sup>, *bambucos*<sup>18</sup>, and *torbellinos*<sup>19</sup> traditionally performed in solo performances or by *estudiantinas*<sup>20</sup>. For me, it was of great interest to approach this music, familiar in the musical context of my family, but distant, as the interpretation of *pasillos* and *bambucos* on the *Llanera* Harp is not an everyday occurrence.

Upon arriving, I realized the existence of another festival, organized by the municipality, occurring simultaneously in another part of town. Also, due to the town’s proximity to the Colombian Pacific, Afro-Colombian music had a big musical scene and would be represented during the program of this smaller festival.

Soon after my arrival I met and was warmly welcomed by the “Canto por la Vida” Foundation, a music school specialized in traditional Colombian music. Some of its faculty members were part of the “El Mono Nuñez” Festival, and at the same time, its students were

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<sup>17</sup> *Pasillo* or *Pasillos*: musical genre and dance, originally from the Andean region of Colombia, which deviated from the European Valz at the beginning of the XIX century. Overtime, this style developed through all Latin America.

<sup>18</sup> *Bambuco* or *Bambucos*: musical genre and dance, originally from the Andean region of Colombia, with elements of Indigenous, African and Spanish traditions. This style includes the performance of plucked string instruments and percussion.

<sup>19</sup> *Torbellino* or *Torbellinos*: musical genre and dance, originally from the Eastern Andean region of Colombia, with elements of Indigenous and Spanish traditions. Generally, this style is used to accompany storytelling lyrics.

<sup>20</sup> Large ensembles of plucked strings instruments -such as Tiples, Bandolas, Requintos- that performs traditional Andean music, normally in the presence of a conductor and performing a repertoire following a music score.

participating and performing at the smaller festival. During my nearly week-long presence in town, I was able to appreciate the instrumental development of their students, as well as the educational methods used by the school to approach the notation of traditional music. There, the use of notation was based on Western classical standards and intricately linked to the articulations reflected in the scores. However, at the same time, the foundation is proposing experimentation with contemporary commercial styles, seeking a blend of instruments in alternative formats.

The town's events included late-night musical gatherings, where traditional pieces were performed by festival participants and other musicians. In these spaces, a fusion between performers with great musical experience and new emerging interpreters encouraged discussions and constructive criticism among them.

A remarkable characteristic that caught my attention during this part of the journey was that despite the use of the score being linked to the performance, at certain moments, improvisation on these traditional styles took on a primary role while the score assumed a secondary role. In this way, unique moments of personal interpretations of the genre style were exposed. Although, Andean music within traditional Colombian music, is the one that has the most academic influence in relation to Western classical music. In contrast, I noticed how Afro-Colombian heritage music is - in the context of this town - entirely disconnected from the score. Only improvisation played the primary role in the discourse.

Alexander Duque, an academic musician from the University of Valle, who is the author of the work **Beginner's Guide to South Pacific Music: "What's Up with You!!!"** (Translated by the author)<sup>21</sup>, was in town, and I had the opportunity of meeting with him. During our conversation, I mentioned a bit about this musical notation project. He suggested that notation systems should resonate with the traditional instruments and social context of any musical style. In his booklet, he developed a notation that includes a visual representation of the instrument and performance hand positions techniques, in a way that local musicians from the traditional music may easily assimilate. This was a crucial point in my research, as I saw something contrasting that diverged from the Western notation that prevails in most of the traditional Colombian music.

Leaving Ginebra, I headed to the city of Bogota. During my visit, I participated in multiple cultural events and taught a workshop to a young generation of harpists at the Llano y Joropo Academy. Simultaneously, the musical festival "Joropo at the Park"(Translation by

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<sup>21</sup> Cartilla de Iniciación Musical Pacífico sur: "Que te Pasa Vo !!!"

the author)<sup>22</sup> was taking place, and several of my colleagues were participating. This festival focuses on llanera music, the musical style of my instrument. In this style, like in Colombian Pacific music, there is no use of scores for musical interpretation. Once again improvisation is the main way of performing the repertoire.

After spending two weeks in Bogota in search of sources, I decided to visit two other contrasting areas of the country. These locations are distant from the traditional music circuits in Colombia. I chose to do this in search of music outside my prior knowledge. The first location is Norcasia, Caldas, where I hoped to witness some traditional music related to that area. I thought that in this region, I might encounter *chirimias*<sup>23</sup>. Unfortunately, I found none of these. Currently the musical connection in this area is leaning more towards commercial music with a Mexican influence.

A comparable situation occurred in Pasto, Nariño, one of the main cities in the south of the country, near the border with Ecuador. Here, rural music was not readily accessible. Searching for it required traveling to areas where security was not optimal, reflecting one of the country's harsh realities. In Pasto, I was able to gather information for future studies, but it did not directly contribute to this research.

Returning to Bogota, I had the opportunity of meeting with Maria José Salgado, director of the master's program in traditional Colombian music at Universidad del Bosque, who shared access to valuable information about the music systems of the Colombian Caribbean. With this new information, I realized the value placed on improvisation in the traditional musical language and potential notations for traditional instruments of the Colombian Caribbean.

Overall, the trip to Colombia provided me with detailed information about musical notation in relation to musical tradition. The general finding is that there exists only one notation system focused on the representation of all the articulations and expressions used in instrumental performance. I found very few cases of an alternate notation, and at the same time, finding little evidence of musical proposals or ensemble formats that combine different traditional genres. The value of musical improvisation, within tradition, led me to realize the need for a musical notation proposal that enhances the moments when a musician's personal expression becomes the primary medium of a music performance.

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<sup>22</sup> "Joropo al Parque"

<sup>23</sup> Ensembles of flutes and drums that improvise using a not tuned to tempered pitch scale.

### 2.2.2 Case 2 – Musical Notation Concept Development

This section entails the conceptual strategy used from the notation systems towards the creation of an alternative for intercultural notation in music.

One of the main departure points towards the strategy implemented in music notation and the compositional approach on this research, is based on the notion of how the scores are related to the performance interpretation, but nevertheless scores are not the determining factor of the piece. According to (Chuliá,2022) “(...) the configuration or morphologies of a score are ‘determined contexts’, for them to be determined they should offer necessary identity relationships between contexts and parts.” (Translation by the author)<sup>24</sup>.

From this point of view, I suggest the composer could consider the relationship between the phenomenon of performing, the context of the performance, and the audience it is directed to, while creating the score. The phenomena of performing, as I understand it, comprises the *cultural musical frame* of each individual performer. The context of performance is not limited to the location, but it could include the interaction of multiple cultural frames carried by each performer of an ensemble. My proposal suggests that the score should not limit the performer by the notation. I intend to enable the performers to showcase their musical background and expertise.

With my proposal in place, the role as a standard ‘composer’ no longer serves the objective. Due to this, the concept proposed by Earle Brown could offer an alternative approach to composing. According to Bailey (1992), Brown stated: “(...) The unique experience for a composer in the use of improvisation must be the relinquishing of control over at least some of the music and, even more critically for the composer, passing over that control not to 'chance' but to other musicians.”

Based on Brown’s statement, I purposely left uncontrolled musical moments that could spark contributions that enhance music collaboration. When I mean uncontrolled musical moments, I refer to the notion of reducing the notation of musical articulations, dynamics and motivic to development to offer a space for performers to contribute with their own *cultural musical frame*. As a result, the moments where each performer can contribute would offer depth to the composition.

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<sup>24</sup> “Las configuraciones o morfologías de una partitura son contextos determinados, si bien para que éstos sean determinantes deben ofrecer relaciones necesarias de identidad en sus ámbitos y sus partes”.



These uncontrolled moments offer a composition that allows the possibility for intercultural music collaboration, through improvisation. According to Bailey (1982) in an interview to Paco Peña, flamenco guitarist, Bailey concluded: “(...) This is one of the immediate and direct effects of improvisation. It secures the total involvement of the performer. Better than any other means it provides the possibility for the player to completely identify with the music.” I would argue that any player could completely identify with a composition that offers such an option of shared ownership.

### **New Approach to Composition Techniques**

The composition techniques used for these pieces start from the principle of using existing techniques, to then re-approach them towards the creative intercultural music collaboration. My strategy was always centered on how to generate structural elements in the compositions and arrangements, serving as the starting points to generate moments that allowed the performers re-interpretation, exploration and improvisation, within the traditional Colombian music framework.

My intention here is not to expand on the music theory behind the composition technique in detail. Instead, I offer a general description of the concepts I have re-interpreted for the creative process of this research.

It is worth mentioning that due to the nature and early stages of this intercultural musical notation proposal, the aim is to evaluate these strategies to then expand the research on future investigations.

To achieve these structural elements, the following approaches were in place:

- The use of canon phrasing and invertible counterpoint by implementing proposed ‘chord tones’ as the main structure, to then create harmonic progression or melodic elements using counterpoint species from the jazz theory standpoint.
- Controlled intervals or ‘dyads’ structures for passages open to re-interpretation.
- Structural motivic development of musical ‘cells’ through harmonization and re-harmonization techniques from the jazz theory standpoint to achieve diverse harmonic colors.
- Jazz ‘soli techniques’ as voicing writing, mixed with contemporary quartal voicing approaches to create juxtaposed melodic ‘density’ structures.

- Inspired by Schenkerian analysis concepts, compose layers of ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ structural elements.

### **New Approach to Notation Strategies**

Following I would like to present the strategies used for the composition process of the pieces in preparation for the master’s concert recital. It is worth mentioning that the notation system in some pieces was a mixture of strategies. I intended to make every piece with a different notation frame with the intention to compare results. Not all the pieces of the concert included a notation system. In this chapter I will only present the pieces with a written score. Full scores of the pieces are included in the appendices. Details of the entire program will be presented in chapter 3.

#### **- Espíritu Colombiano – by Lucho Bermúdez<sup>25</sup> – Arrangement.**

This piece is an iconic *pasillo* of traditional Colombian music that it was originally written for a large ensemble format similar to a jazz big band instrumentation mixture with traditional music instruments. Initially, I transcribed the piece, because of the absence of scores and previous materials. My intention was to only use a score reduction concept, on a grand staff, for all performers to see the structure and melodic lines of the piece throughout rehearsals and performance. The score included slash notation to represent moments for free interpretation and proposes a repeated rhythmic pattern, for any accompaniment instrument, to be used as reference.

The score reduction given to the musicians included names of the performers with the intention to guide the instrumentation and performer appearances at a macro level.

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<sup>25</sup> More information on Lucho Bermúdez biography in chapter 3.4.

Figure 2. section of Espiritu colombiano, presenting layers used in notation.

The score reduction also included a graphic score notation for an open section of free improvisation. Initially this section had a defined structure. However, this idea was modified during rehearsals at a later stage.

The following figure presents the final written graphic notation of the section:

Figure 3. Graphic score Espiritu colombiano. Designed by the Author.

## - Precio de Festival – Original Composition

*Precio de Festival* is a composition that uses a combination structural frame as well as graphic notation to enhance a free improvisation section of the piece. Due to the nature of the piece that was a combination of non-tonal center with modal sections, I decided to implement written rhythmical patterns suggested on a *backbone* structure. One of the main determining elements of this piece is that the melodies composed were designed with a

freedom of choice. Performers would need to decide the one that resonates with the instrument range and difficulty levels.



Figure 4. Structural elements of a section. Designed by the Author.

This piece also has a graphic score that was set up as an open free improvisation section, where the overlapping of solos had to be developed through intrinsically reacting to another performers' improvisation. This section can be seen in the full score included in the appendix.

#### - Echo in the vast Universe – Original Composition

The structural frame of this piece was the main characteristic to be written in the score. The idea was to propose a frame that presents key elements about dynamics, textural aspects as well as some whole ensemble textures. Also, this piece includes comments that would describe the target elements, but not to direct the performer's way of playing each note.



Figure 5. Structural frame of violin section in score. Designed by the Author.

#### - Bordo! – Original Composition

*Bordo* was established as lead sheet score closely related to the dynamics of a jazz small band ensemble. I suggested the melody, harmony, and some of the formal aspects of the piece. I thought of this piece on a modal music system to enhance the qualities of modal music representative of Senegalese music. The main characteristic of the melodic line in this

case is that there is no articulation, and the use of slash lines indicates free moments of improvisation based on performers' *cultural frame*. A coda section was set up to be worked and negotiated as an ensemble.



**Cantos y Sabana**

**Vidines**

**Viento**

- Sul flauto
- Sul clarinetto
- Acornucos
- Col legno

**Paguros**

- Nitus aguris
- Nitus cantus
- golpes a la capa

**Canto de Vagueria**

desarrollar tema a partir de estos  
Motivos - orden indeterminado

**Cello**  
preparando

**Zapateo**

3/4 ||: ẋ y ẋ | ẋ ẋ :||

- Ritmo Ebbble
- Sabroso

**Cueriaó**

**Chamaquiaó**

**Todos**

12/8

12/8

Cu

vi

a

Walt

Figure 7. Score segment of distinctive nuances of the piece. Designed by the Author.



Image 5. Full Ensemble on stage. From left to righth: Nicolás Castañeda Lozano (*Llanera* Harp), Sergio Castrillon (Prepared Cello), Pilar Zorro (Violin), Ana Lazar (Violin), Javier Navarro ( Double Bass), Issiaka Dembele ( D'jembe). Markus Snellman (Drumset), Ossi Raippalinna (Tama, Percussion), João Lopes (Vibraphone), Mehrnoosh Zolfaghari (Santoor), Shafeeq Alsadi (Qanun).

Photo by Maarit Kytöharju, Global Fest, Helsinki – Finland, 2023.

## Chapter 3: Depth / Profundidad

### 3. Beyond Tradition Master Concert

The "Beyond Tradition" master's concert performance, as part of the practice-based research for my graduation thesis, entailed the arrangement and composition of music rooted in my personal artistry. The overarching aim was to explore diverse modalities of transmitting compositional ideas, thereby empowering musicians from different corners of the globe—with divergent cultural backgrounds and varying levels of musical literacy—to transcend beyond their *cultural musical frame*. Drawing inspiration from the sounds of Colombia, the music conceived aimed to generate a musical interchange wherein each musician's interpretation catalyzed in an intercultural dialogue.

#### 3.1 Previous Consideration Before the Concert

Prior to the musical rehearsals, I decided to carefully consider the selection of collaborators who could enrich the research process. Consequently, I opted to extend open invitations to musicians with diverse musical literacy and backgrounds, with the objective of fostering a truly intercultural environment. Eleven performers participated in the project (including the author).

All members of the ensemble were based in Helsinki, Finland. Following is the list participants' countries of origin, nationalities and instruments of expertise:

*Students from bachelors and master program at the Global Music Department:*

- Ana Lazar (Slovenia) Violin
- Javier Navarro (Chile) Double Bass
- João Lopes (Portugal) Vibraphone, Percussion
- Markus Snellman (Finland) Drum Set
- Mehrnoosh Zolfaghari (Iran) Santoor
- Ossi Raippalinna (Finland) Tama, Percussion
- Shafeeq Alsadi (Palestine) Qanun and Voice



*Special Guest:*

- Pilar Zorro (Colombia) Violin / Concert Supervisor
- Issiaka Dembele (Burkina Faso) Balafon, Djembe
- Sergio Castrillón (Colombia) Prepared Cello

*Researcher, composer, 'music – facilitator', and performer:*

- Nicolas Castañeda Lozano (Colombia) *Llanera* Harp

### **3.2 Performers' Perspectives and Roles Context**

To comprehend the viewpoints and dispositions of each ensemble member prior to the rehearsal process, I designed an online survey in English using Microsoft Forms for the performers to voluntarily fill out. A survey in French was written for Issiaka Dembele, as we lacked a common language for communication.

The objectives of the survey were as follows:

- Assess and consider a possible diverse literacy knowledge that would require accommodations throughout the planning and preparation of the repertoire.
- Establish a safe space of collaboration and shared ownership for all the members of the ensemble, that could contribute towards the concert's preparation and outcome. When alluding to a safe space my emphasis was placed not only on facilitating performers' music-making, but to offer a rehearsal environment without fear of judgment for deviating from the musical notation or straying from their personal artistic identity.

The inquiries were focused on the following subjects:

- Interculturalism: Participants' understanding of the concept and willingness to collaborate with musicians from diverse cultures.
- Improvisation: Participants' experiences with improvisation. How they feel improvising individually or with others.

- Musical notation literacy: Participants' knowledge of music notation. Which type of musical notation was most comfortable for them to use during their musical interpretation, both in improvisation and sight-reading.
- Learning music preferences: Participants' inclination to learn by ear or solely through music sheets.

### Results from Online Survey before the Concert

The result of this survey affected the first compositional frame developed in case two. Even though I pre-composed and arranged the pieces, as a result of the survey's answers, I had to change many elements of the first creation process to serve the purpose of intercultural communication.

Eight members of the ensemble participated in the survey in preparation for the beginning of the concert. The intention of this survey was to learn their musical background, artistic preferences and opinions prior to the development of the project.

Summary of their answers:

#### a) Level of comfort with music notation

Seven of the surveyed musicians expressed their knowledge of western notation, with varied levels of comfort at sight reading: five expressed how they had 'lost practice' or are not fast at sight reading. Two felt comfortable.

Experience in other notation systems:

Type of notation	No. of musicians with experience with this notation system
Lead sheets	5
Chord chart	3
Big band charts	1
Graphic Notation	2

Table 2. Performers' experience with other notation systems. Designed by the Author.

One of the performers has a basic knowledge of western notation and understands its importance but expressed his preference of experiencing music through oral tradition.

b) Background in music improvisation

All performers used improvisation regularly and had experience improvising with other musicians. The motivation to improvise varied significantly: five performers see improvisation as a way to self-express spontaneously and unrestrained. One performer saw improvisation as an important aspect of the musical traditions he performs. Two described improvisation as part of music making even if the notes have been decided beforehand. In their perspective the act of improvising includes the expectation that comes with adjusting an interpretation (dynamics, timber, ornamentation, among others) to different musical situations.

When improvising with others, two participants expressed the importance of a 'safe space' where a sense of mutual support among the musicians enables an open exchange and development of ideas.

On the other hand, one of them mentioned how it is not always easy to establish a fluid improvisation dialogue when the performer's "(...) background in improvisation is different from jazz or other tonal music".

It is worth mentioning how one of the answers included the importance of learning to "(...) give a breathing space to the other" when they are presenting their solo improvisation. Finally, two performers mentioned how improvising with others can create a profound human connection because it "(...) gives trust in one another".

When asked if they preferred to improvise with a music sheet guide or by ear: five of them answered that it would depend on the musical style and characteristic situation of the performance, four prefer to improvise by ear, and one mentioned that professionalism meant adapting to any situation.

c) Background in learning by ear. Musical learning preferences.

Six participants use learning by ear regularly, one prefers learning with a music sheet, while another does not use the music sheet regularly as a starting point but prefers to write down in some way what he learns by ear.

Preferred methods of study:

Method of study	No. of musicians that prefer this method
By ear	1
By music sheet	2
By ear and music sheet simultaneously	3
Depends on music style and/or time to prepare	2

Table 3. Performers' preferred methods of study. Designed by the Author.

d) Genres of preference when performing.

The musical genres the musicians felt more comfortable performing were very contrasting. A common interest in traditional music stood out. The following genres categories are presented the way participants answered:

Musical Genre	No. of musicians that regularly perform that genre
Contemporary Improvisation, Experimental Improvisation	3
Latin, South American folk	3
Jazz, Big Band	3
World music	3
Western Classical Music	2
Nordic, Finnish folk	2
Persian, Middle Eastern, Modal music	2
West Africa, Traditional African	2
Balkan, Balfolk	1
Pop, Rock, Metal, Hip-hop	1
Rhythmic music	1

Table 1. Genres that performers felt comfortable with. Designed by the Author.

It is worth mentioning that four of the collaborators frequently create a blend or fusion of musical genres establishing their own personal style as a performer.

e) Stands on interculturalism

In the group there was a diverse understanding of the term interculturalism. Five members understand it as the interaction, communication, meaningful dialogue, and collaboration between different cultural backgrounds. Three performers highlighted the

importance of appreciating, understanding and respectfully approaching other cultures. Two referred to the “(...) exchange of cultural knowledge” and “(...) learning about different cultures”. Finally, one person describes it as “(...) Culture without borders, without discrimination”.

f) Attitude and concerns before the beginning of the project

At the beginning of the project, all performers were excited about collaborating with people from different origins. The expectations were of an enriching and meaningful experience where music would emerge as a means of communication with people of different origins.

The only potential concern expressed by one of the musicians was the limited rehearsal and preparation time available before the concert.

### **Leadership and Collaborator’s Role**

After the initial survey results were collected, the allocation of roles was carefully considered, seeking to provide the participants with an ample creative space to propose and experiment ideas. Flexibility and adaptability were crucial for both the performers and myself as the *musical-facilitator* (Perks, 2021). My position as *musical-facilitator* was also inspired by the thoughts of Earle Brown (Bailey, 1992) where giving up control at least in some of the music is unique.

When assigning roles within each piece, I focused on doing so according to everyone’s skills and preferences to ensure each performer felt at ease. This contributed to fostering a healthy environment, particularly given the complexity of merging various artistic identities in creating the music.

### **3.3 Rehearsal strategy and development**

Because of the variety of the ensembles presented in the concert, rehearsals began through sectionals. A rehearsal schedule was organized in accordance to the time availability of the performers. All rehearsals took place at the Helsinki Music Centre, 7<sup>th</sup> floor, Sibelius Academy – Uniarts Helsinki.

Week	Rehearsals that took place	Music rehearsed
Week 1 Nov. 13 to Nov 19	Individual rehearsals with: Tama, Drum set, Bass, Qanun, Santoor, Violin, Vibraphone 1 Trio rehearsal	Cumbia - rhythmic style. Espiritu colombiano. Bordó.
Week 2 Nov. 20 to Nov. 26	3 Sectional rehearsals, 1 Full ensemble rehearsal, 1 Duo rehearsal	Precio de Festival Espiritu colombiano. Fiesta de Negritos Dilo
Week 3 Nov. 27 to Dec. 3	1 Full ensemble rehearsal, 2 Duo rehearsals, 1 Voice, Qanun sectional	Precio de Festival Espiritu colombiano Fiesta de Negritos Dilo
Week 4 Dec. 4 to Dec. 10	2 Full ensemble rehearsals, 1 Trio rehearsal, 1 Voice, Qanun sectional	Un eco en el vasto universo Precio de Festival Espiritu colombiano Fiesta de Negritos Bordó
Week 5 Dec. 11 to Dec. 14	1 Quartet rehearsal, 1 Duo rehearsal, 1 Voice, Qanun sectional, 1 Violins sectional, 1 Strings sectional, General Rehearsal on stage.	Cantos y Sabana Review of all the pieces.

Table 4. Rehearsal timeline. Designed by the Author.

Due to the diverse array of music notation techniques I used to convey each piece, coupled with the unique characteristics of each musician, the preparation process in rehearsals was approached initially on a case-by-case basis through constant conversations with each participant. As a result, modification to the scores occurred, according to the findings during the rehearsing process, always targeting the highest level of comfort and needs of each performer.

### Specific Rehearsal Targets

As it has been emphasized, the aim was not for performers to adhere strictly to traditional Colombian music performance practices, but rather to offer their own reinterpretations based on the Colombian music framework. As a result, the exploration of the pieces was always based on:

- Exposure to the musical context of each piece—including the story and inspiration behind them—, as well as offering audio and video references to illustrate the characteristics related to traditional Colombian music.
- Comparative analysis during rehearsals, through open conversations, to uncover common rhythmic or melodic elements from participants' musical backgrounds within the framework of the pieces.
- Freedom of choice and welcoming ideas at all times.
- Experimentation with the ensemble's instrumentation outline of the pieces to encourage the discovery of suggestions that enhanced the interpretation towards the concert outcome.
- Provision of support for the comprehension of music notation and musical concepts as necessary, based on individuals' levels of music literacy.
- Musical jamming to embody the nuances and structural elements of the piece.

### 3.4 Project Description

The following section discloses a general description of each piece and reveals important considerations taken from the rehearsal process. Each piece will be described in the concert program order. The video recording link to this concert is available in the reference list.

#### **Espíritu Colombiano**

Colombian Spirit (Translation by the author)

Composer: Luis E. Bermudez Acosta (1912-1994)

Arrangement for 2 Violins, Qanun, Santoor, *Llanera* Harp, Double Bass, Vibraphone, Talking Drum, Drum Set.

Starting point on video reference: 10:30

Lucho Bermudez, as he is generally known, represents an example of incorporating foreign musical elements to the traditional Colombian music. Influenced by Benny Godman big band style, Bermudez developed structures of Colombian music beyond the tradition. I

always have admired his work and thought this would be a perfect piece to begin the performance<sup>26</sup>.

a) Music notation process outline:

Week	Rehearsal description	Rehearsal Objectives / Music Notation Used	Notation Outcome
1	Individual rehearsals: Violin, Qanun, Santoor, Bass, Vibraphone, Drum set, Percussion.	Present the main theme and rhythmic structure of the piece.	Request to create a music sheet with quarter notes adjustments for the Santoor.
2	3 Sectional rehearsals 1 Full ensemble rehearsal	Present the complete score reduction including the version for Santoor.	Small changes are needed before the Da Capo, and a guide to the beginning should be added. Request for a music sheet adjusted to the Vibraphone.
3	1 Full ensemble rehearsal	Hand out the edited last page of the score plus the new version for Vibraphone.	The extend of the score (4 pages) was causing trouble to perform. It was decided to create individual parts by instrument family. E.g.: Violins and Qanun.
4	2 Full ensemble rehearsals	Hand out the individual parts.	These new parts were much welcomed and helped improve the performance of the piece, although some performers preferred to continue using the original score.
5	1 string sectional General rehearsal	Review and continue to secure the comfort and ease of the performance	

Table 5. Espiritu colombiano. Music notation process. Designed by the Author.

<sup>26</sup> I have a strong connection with this orchestra. When I was beginning my clarinet studies in Colombia, I had the privilege of studying with Nacor Baron, Clarinetist and orchestra director after Bermudez passed away. In my youth, I used to go to the orchestra rehearsals and these experiences are one of my main pillars of my music identity.



Performers were first introduced to this piece through individual rehearsals, with the intention to access each individual's reaction, possibilities and characteristics that would allow a successful arrangement. My intention was not to teach them a prepared arrangement, but to allow them to re-interpret and self-determine how to participate during the piece. Having this in mind, I did not teach the traditional frame of Colombian *pasillo* style but exposed them to the feeling of the style.

A challenge that I encountered was the length of the music sheet. This piece is quite long, and the original work has a very determined compositional style. At the end, the score had to be reduced even more than I wished, mainly to adjust it to each performer's needs.

This piece reminded me of a middle eastern soundscape. I decided to include an improvisation section through graphic notation that enhanced both the original piece style and the nuances of the Qanun and Santoor.

#### b) Interpretation development during rehearsals:

Due to the openness of the score, interpretation ideas came to light immediately. Here are some of those decisions: the Santoor player showed me the inconvenience for her instrument to perform some of the chromatic notes. After exploring options, it was decided to change some of the inconvenient notes from the score and keep quarter tone notes available to be included when the performer felt appropriate, especially during the middle eastern soundscape graphic score improvisation section. The Bass performer, who was quite at ease performing this piece, suggested adding a Bass solo over a chord progression as an ending to the graphic score improvisation in preparation to the entrance and mood of the next piece section, while giving some time to the Qanun and Santoor to adjust their tuning. Violin player suggested the use of Balkan violin rhythm techniques as an accompaniment, following the chord chart. The Drum Set player suggested to the percussion section to perform different textural changes throughout the piece.

## Cantos y Sabana

*Chants and Savanna* (Translation by the author)

Composer: Nicolás Castañeda Lozano (1989-)

Composition for 2 Violins, 1 Prepared Cello, *Llanera* Harp

Starting point on video reference: 17:30

This piece explores the sounds and gestures of the llanera music through a fixed score in a improvisational approach. It is worth mentioning that the instrumentation of the piece was with non-instruments of the tradition, except for the *Llanera* Harp.

### a) Music notation process outline:

Week	Rehearsal description	Rehearsal Objectives / Music Notation Used	Notation Outcome
5	1 Quartet rehearsal General rehearsal	Graphic score was presented.	A final cue was added.

Table 6. Cantos y Sabana. Music notation process. Designed by the Author.

Due to the availability of the performers, it was expected to only have one full rehearsal before the concert day. The only challenge presented was a lack of cue for the coda. The prepared cello performer suggested counting out loud 6 beats in Spanish as a countdown to the coda. This was added to the score.

### b) Interpretation development during rehearsals:

One of the performers had never used a graphic score. After explaining the overall idea and visual references of the llanera music scene and soundscape the run through was very successful.

## Shadows

Composer: Nicolás Castañeda Lozano (1989-)

Composition for: Solo *Llanera* Harp

Starting point on video reference: 27:20

A representation of challenges in life.

It is inspired by my quest to see what the limits of the instrument are, melodically and harmonically speaking. Nowadays *Llanera* Harpists are adding levers of the Celtic harp to the structure of the *llanera* instrument to allow a faster change of keys and tuning. I see this as a great idea, but I believe that the range of the instrument can be expanded without these changes to the instrument. I want to go beyond its known possibilities, and document all this process for future *Llanera* Harpists.

As a composition, this piece is based on modulations far from the initial key and the search on how it can be performed in a diatonic instrument. Additionally, I explored how an improvisational approach can be done through a piece with this type of harmonic structure. The complexity of the piece presents the development of new extended techniques I have developed throughout the year 2023, closely inspired by the lessons with contemporary jazz pianist Ran Blake. More information about Ran's approach to the development of a personal style can be found in the book: *Primacy of the Ear* (Blake, 2010)

## Dilo

Say it (Translation by the author)

Composer: Nicolás Castañeda Lozano (1989-)

Composition for: *Llanera* Harp, Drum Set

Starting point on video reference: 34:30

I composed several years ago as a solo *Llanera* Harp piece inspired by the *llanera* music style *Onda Nueva*<sup>27</sup> from the late 60's in Venezuela, especially through the work of Alderamo Romero, orchestra director and composer. Additionally, I used a modal scale not related to the traditional *llanera* tuning system.

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<sup>27</sup> Musical genre, part of the *llanera* music tradition, from the end of the XX century. It is a style of music that mixed *llanera* music with jazz elements as well as bossa nova.

### Interpretation development during rehearsals:

To propose an intercultural dialogue through two contrasting instruments, this piece's instrumentation consists of Drum Set and *Llanera* Harp. Improvisation is the key element of this composition. Because of this, there were no music sheets. Instead, the music was developed and presented through the musician's individual enquiry and suggestions, that consequently transformed the original piece into an intercultural expression that will not be repeated after the performance.

A challenge arose when the drummer felt the need to have a clear understanding and knowledge of the Colombian tradition. My approach was to offer through jamming and experiencing together the musical style in place. At the beginning, this approach did not allow the drummer to feel open to propose and expand his personal style. As he experienced the tradition and began to understand the piece, this cluster slowly opened, allowing him to feel more comfortable with the performance.

### **Bordó**

Composer: Nicolás Castañeda Lozano (1989-)

Composition for: Balafon, Taking Drum/Percussion, *Llanera* Harp

Starting point on video reference: 41:40

This piece is inspired by the music of Senegal and the strong connection with the *Joropo*<sup>28</sup> style of the *Llanera* Harp repertoire. Through conversations with Ossi Raippalinna and conducting some analysis throughout the year I noticed big similarities between the Senegalise clave and the phrasing of the *Pajarillo*<sup>29</sup> style performing. Here, the Senegalise key pattern or 'clave' has a similar phrasing with the *Pajarillo's* *Llanera* Harp accompaniment patterns, in which at some point rhythmical synchrony opened the possibility of bridging elements from both traditional music's.

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<sup>28</sup> Another expression to refers to the llanera music tradition, especially to the *Pajarillos*.

<sup>29</sup> Musical style, part of the llanera music tradition.

a) Music notation process outline:

Week	Rehearsal description	Rehearsal Objectives / Music Notation Used	Notation Outcome
1	1 Trio rehearsal	Lead sheet was presented.	Lead sheets would not be used.
4	1 Trio rehearsal	Hand out of the graphic structure guide sheet.	Received and used with success.
5	General rehearsal	Final run thru.	

Table 7. Bordó. Music notation process. Designed by the Author.

The main challenge appeared when I realized that the Balafon player had no interest in using the lead sheet. This expanded the language barrier that was expected. Because of this, I wrote a graphic structure guide sheet in French that made him comfortable to understand musical form and nuances of the piece. This was a strategy inspired by the conversation in Colombia with Alexander Duque, where he shared the necessity of using a notation that can relate closely to the performer's needs, reflecting elements of the context in place.

b) Interpretation development during rehearsals:

From the beginning, the rhythmic style blend I suggested was very successful. But, as I mentioned, the lead sheet did not contribute to learning the melodic structure of the piece. Therefore, the melody was learned by ear, and recordings became the main source of practice. Although the attitude was positive throughout the first rehearsal, many ideas for the structure of the piece were proposed by the Balafon and Talking Drum players, it was an intricate meeting.

To my surprise, after handing out the graphic structure sheet in the second rehearsal, the interpretation of the piece and the contribution of the Balafon player throughout the rehearsal was unlimited. The Balafon player proposed new ideas to the piece that contributed immensely to the outcome.

It is worth mentioning the support from Ossi who helped overcome the language barrier.

## Un Eco en el Vasto Universo

*An Echo in the Vast Universe* (Translation by the author)

Composer: Nicolás Castañeda Lozano (1989-)

Composition for: 2 Violins, Qanun, Santoor, *Llanera* Harp, Double Bass, Vibraphone, Drum Set.

Starting point on video reference: 49:26

This is the only piece not fully related to Colombian music. Written on a slow waltz intention, this piece aims to reflect on human diversity and how important it is to honor the positive values of humanity in turbulent times. My objective was to write a piece that gives flexibility to the performers to use their life experiences and *cultural frames* as the main factor that determines the melodic nuances of the piece.

### a) Music notation process outline:

Week	Rehearsal description	Rehearsal Objectives / Music Notation Used	Notation Outcome
4	2 Full ensemble rehearsal	Hand out individual parts. Sight read the whole piece.	Successful outcome
5	2 individual rehearsals: Violin, Voice. 1 string sectional. General rehearsal	Gain a deeper understanding of the piece's message.	

Table 8. Un Eco en el Vasto Universo. Music notation process. Designed by the Author.

This was the last piece presented to the full ensemble. Due to the previous experiences with the other pieces, I had a clearer understanding of the ensemble's sonority and individual characteristics. This complemented my compositional process.

### b) Interpretation development during rehearsals:

From the beginning the notation was well understood by all the performers. It allowed the performers to freely contribute through their own interpretation and personal choices towards the piece. They were encouraged to try many variations to their interpretation and if possible, to avoid making a final decision. Through the rehearsals, interpretation agreements between the players materialized without the need to be shared with the whole ensemble.

The 1st Violin and Qanun / Singer met with me individually to discuss in more detail the meaning of the piece and practice their solo. The Qanun and voice player was very touched by the piece. In reflection to the reality of his country, he decided to sing an excerpt from a poem written by Mohammed Al-Qaisi, called "Wanderer of the Night".

Original text in Arabic	English translation
عابر الليل  إنني أحمل آلامي وأمضي عبر آلاف الدروب الشائكة إنه حبي باق في قرار الأرض يا عمواس	"Wanderer of the Night"  I carry my pains and walk Through thousands of thorny paths. Indeed, my love remains entrenched in the land's essence, O 'Amwas"  (Translation by Alsadi, 2024)

Table 9. Un Eco en el Vasto Universo. Lyrics. Designed by the Author.

The Singer's solo was only practiced once with the whole ensemble. He was uncertain about doing it. At the end, it was decided that he would make the decision between performing or not, at the concert, during the harp solo. When he sang, the piece went into indescribable emotions that transformed the environment of the concert hall to an extent that I still remember today. I am glad he decided to sing.

### Precio de Festival

*Price at the Festival* (Translation by the author)

Composer: Nicolás Castañeda Lozano (1989-)

Composition for: 2 Violins, Qanun, Santoor, *Llanera* Harp, Double Bass, Vibraphone, Talking Drum, Yembe, Drum Set.

Starting point on video reference: 1:01:23

This piece is inspired by the field trip to Colombia where, during the music festivals I attended, prices of goods and services were raised if the customer looked like a tourist, demonstrating how a person can take advantage of a situation to their benefit. This piece is a criticism of the current economic situation in Colombia, in which the prices of goods and services have increased exponentially.

a) Music notation process outline:

Week	Rehearsal description	Rehearsal Objectives / Music Notation Used	Notation Outcome
2	1 Full ensemble rehearsal	Handout full score. Sight read the whole piece.	It was clear that individual parts were needed.
3	1 Full ensemble rehearsal	Hand out individual parts.	Success.
4	1 Full ensemble rehearsal	Review and continue to secure the comfort and ease of the performance.	
5	1 String sectional General Rehearsal		

Table 10. Precio de Festival. Music notation process. Designed by the Author.

Originally my intention was to once again present a full score reduction applied as a structural guide that allows each performer to expand and create their own interpretation of the piece. This music sheet was overwhelming for most of the performers. Unlike *Espiritu colombiano*, the score had three staves with very independent lines, complexity regarding the use of dissonant as the consonant, and a rhythmical freedom within an unusual time signature notation. Consequently, individual parts that maintained the original idea were created.

b) Interpretation development during rehearsals:

The major challenge of the piece was to maintain the rhythmic structure while achieving individual freedom. To achieve a solid rhythmic ensemble, much more listening and communication was required. This became the focus during the rehearsals.

Additionally, this piece has a section of graphic score notation that was slowly developed through the ideas that came to light during rehearsals.



## **Fiesta de Negritos**

Composer: Luis E. Bermudez Acosta (1912-1994)

Arrangement for 2 Violins, Qanun, Santoor, *Llanera* Harp, Double Bass, Vibraphone, Talking Drum, Drum Set.

Starting point on video reference: 1:10:07

Once more I decided to use one of the most famous pieces of Lucho Bermudez as the encore of the concert. Throughout the development of this project, written on a traditional lead sheet, the *porro*<sup>30</sup> ‘Fiesta de Negritos’ had the purpose of being an ice breaker and warmup piece that everyone enjoyed. A great way to end; in a Colombian celebration.

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<sup>30</sup> Musical genre and dance, originally from the Caribbean region of Colombia, with elements of African and Spanish traditions. The musical form is based on a call and response form. It has a lively, upbeat, and celebratory beat that is perfect for dancing in pairs.



Image 6. Ensemble on stage 1. From left to right: Issiaka Dembele (Djembe), Markus Snellman (Drumset), Ossi Raippalinna (Tama, Percussion), Photo by Maarit Kytöharju, Global Fest, Helsinki – Finland, 2023.

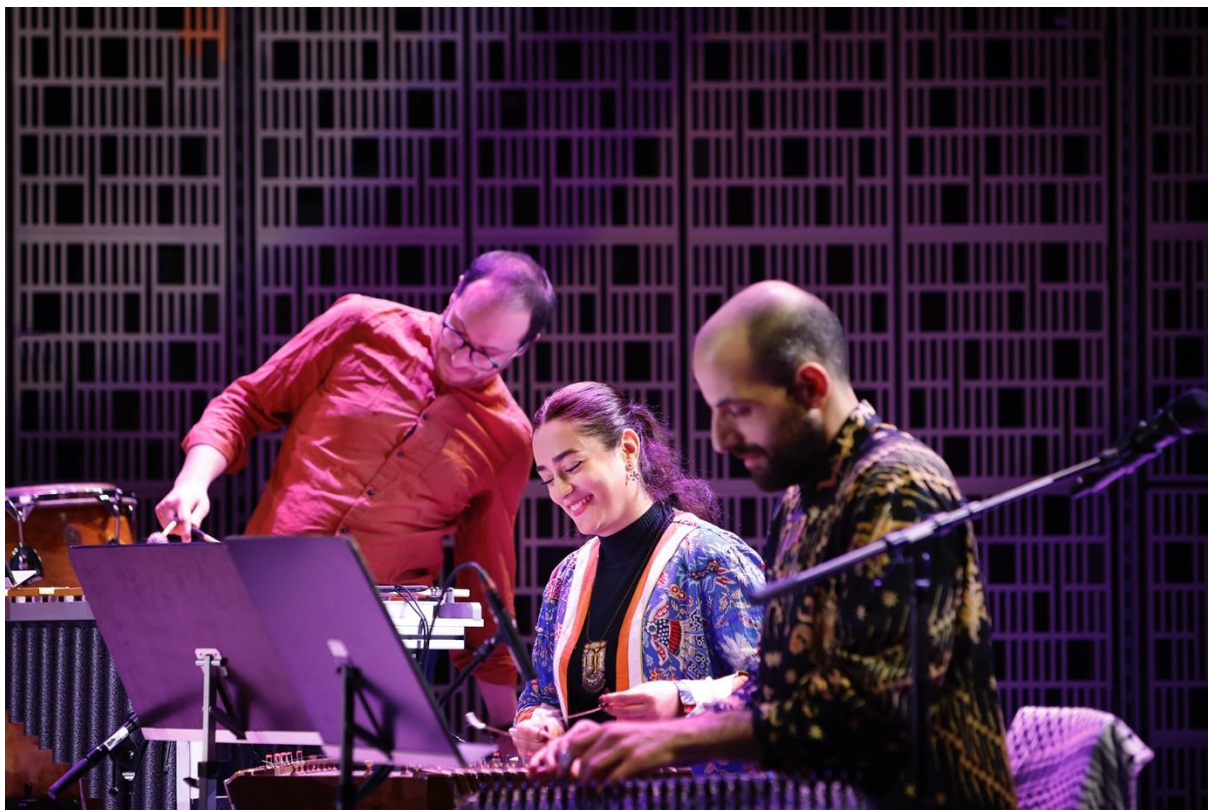


Image 7. Ensemble on stage 2. From left to right: João Lopes (Vibraphone), Mehrnoosh Zolfaghari (Santoor), Shafeeq Alsadi (Qanun). Photo by Maarit Kytöharju, Global Fest, Helsinki – Finland, 2023.

## Chapter 4: Postlude / Postludio

### 4. Transcendence

The master's concert recital presented was a one-hour concert full of emotions through a diverse dynamic and variety of ensembles. As the concert was taking place, a multiplicity of interpolated sounds was set up. The concert was live streamed through the YouTube channel of the university, giving the possibility to share links to friends and colleagues from distinct parts of the world.

During the concert, one could feel a sense of happiness and thrill from the performers and the audience. Still today, people remember the recital as a meaningful concert. It is evident that a connective concert based on intercultural music setup is unique and effective.

#### 4.1 Performers' Reflections

Four members of the ensemble participated in the after-concert survey.

Summary of their answers:

##### a) Reflections about the concert

Overall, the outcome of the concert and the preparation process gave a feeling of success and satisfaction to the performers.

All surveyed musicians expressed their appreciation to the preparation process: "I felt that I was not only a musician that have to read and play, I also was part of the arrangements and composition of every piece that I was participating [in]", "(...) It was intriguing that we began [the process] with a small interview, ... I believe starting the project in this manner greatly contributed to the outcome. I appreciated the individual meetings we had to understand our roles in the project better and to feel comfortable with the music, which helped in building trust among us. I felt truly heard, and even though roles were assigned to me, I felt as comfortable with them as if I had chosen them myself.", "(...) as a non-sight reader musician, I felt really accompanied by the other performers ... when I needed help I had it.", "(...) It also

felt wonderful to play with all the other fellow musicians, as each individual had plenty of space to play in a manner that felt comfortable to them.”

A performer who expressed their after-concert reflections thru WhatsApp said: “(...) we don't have a [speaking] language in common, but music was [the] language through which we were able to communicate well. I had no difficulty integrating into his music because he [the author] was ready in different ways that facilitated working together.”

One of the surveyed mentioned, “(...) I think [an] even deeper musical connection could have been reached if we had used more hours rehearsing”.

All the performers expressed their interest in participating and collaborating on another project like this in the future.

#### b) Intercultural or transcultural outcome

As mentioned in the theoretical framework of this artistic research, I present ‘interculturality’ or ‘intercultural’ as the interactions between diverse *cultural frames*. In this final survey, I decided to include the term ‘transcultural’ in the question, just to assess if the participants thought that the result of the concert experience lined more towards that term. My intention is not to define ‘transculturality’ or ‘transcultural’, as it is a complex concept that may have multiple interpretations and confusion. From my artistic practice and position, I have yet to find a concrete definition that departs from the traditional music practice standpoint.

In this regard, all the performers surveyed thought that the project and performance achieved a combination of interculturalism and transculturalism.

Among the ideas collected after the survey, the following stand out:

“(...) I feel that in every musical creation, collaboration, we should strive for intercultural elements. I believe that in a good musical process, interculturalism naturally occurs through the exchange between different musicians, while still preserving each individual's unique voice. When people from diverse traditions and musical backgrounds come together, there is a risk that mixing different styles might feel forced or confusing rather than harmonious. Pursuing interculturalism or transculturalism adds significant depth to music, and I feel that approaching it with this perspective makes the

music more honest and natural. In our concert and throughout the project, I felt we achieved a combination of both aspects. Although we performed your compositions and some traditional music from Colombia, which I'm not very familiar with, it felt like I was playing music that resonated with me personally. I felt very comfortable throughout the process because there was a high level of sensitivity and understanding among all the musicians and there seemed to be a common interest and goal in the music we were creating.”

## 4.2 Audience Reflection

When composing and arranging the repertoire for this concert, I considered the importance of the audience as the final link to the ‘determined contexts’ (Chuliá, 2022) from the *materialistic philosophy*, as presented in chapter 2. After the concert, given that the performance was realized in Helsinki, Finland, I decided to search interviewees that represented the Finnish artistic cultural scene, outside of the Global Music Program. My position for approaching these interviews was within the *reduction* and *prejudice* methods (Yip, 2020).

A person that I thought could give a constructive criticism of the performance outcome regarding the musical notation systems used -hopefully with a neutral bias towards this research objective- was Mauno Järvelä (b. 1949).

Mauno Järvelä is local musician whose artistic approach resonates with this research, in the context of traditional Finnish music. As a violinist, educator, composer, and the creator of the ‘Näppärit Method’, Mauno has been awarded the “(...) Finland Prize of the arts and honorary doctorate from Sibelius Academy for his life work” (*History | Näppärit*, n.d.-b).

The ‘Näppärit Method’ is described as follows:

“(...)The message of the Näppäri Method to music education is that a sustainable value system can be achieved by combining the classical musical education with local tradition. This guarantees the preserving of original culture and enrichens musical life. The knowledge and appreciation of one’s own culture also helps in understanding other cultures. The Näppäri Method itself has been built upon the centuries old musical tradition of the Kaustinen village. The method is, however, also adaptable to other traditions.

The principles of the Näppäri Method are:

1. To offer the opportunity to learn music to anyone who wants it.
2. To make playing music a part of daily life again.
3. To encourage musicians of all ages and levels to play together.
4. To keep the folk music tradition vibrant and incorporate it into the curriculum.
5. To promote unrestrictive, timeless music education”.

(*The Näppäri Method* | *Näppärit*, n.d.)

After establishing contact with him, we arranged an interview through email. The method I implemented for this interview was to send him the video recording of the master’s concert recital along with the scores of the pieces and three questions. When watching the video recording of the performance, he had a complete overview of the concert and notation system implemented.

Mauno’s answers were received through email in Finnish. Below, his answers after a translation to English.<sup>31</sup>

#### Answers received on April 11, 2024

- *Based on your experience, do you think that an intercultural approach through folk music was achieved during this concert?*

In listening to the recording of the fabulous concert I must say, I perceived a total eloquent dialogue to say the least. Each musician proved to be of extraordinary talent able to honestly transmit colorful and inspired music. All the representatives came from a different culture while breaking barriers and obstacles and creating a special environment. The music was converted into a battlefield of good spirits, shutting out negativities. We need this kind of music in all the corners of the world. In other words, it worked!

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<sup>31</sup> (Translation to Spanish by Asiakas, 2024) native Finnish speaker. (Translation from Spanish to English by Leyva, 2024) native English speaker.

The following question was related to the piece *An Echo in the Vast Universe*:

- *Do you think this musical notation and compositional approach allowed the performers to express their personal style or tradition?*

In this case, (also, in part, *mutatis mutandis*, in other scores), the manner in which the music is composed differs from the traditional, while fitting in the melodies in a very proper way. Rehearsals are all different, as well as the outcome. And like with the musicians themselves, the diversity of Colombian music is represented.

The final question was related to the possibility of music notation and experimentation in traditional Finnish music:

- *Do you think that experimenting on different musical notation approaches could be valuable to Traditional Finnish Music?*

The traditional Finnish music is expressed in a score only partially. It is difficult to write a score of notes with the tradition, fineness and sensitivity without the information required. I know what I am speaking about due to the experience I have had writing scores for Finnish violin tradition. In that experience I have done my best, particularly regarding to a string instrument, as notes need to be strictly written. There the local traditions and the singularity of the regions can be appreciated, although never perfectly. Orally speaking, it is not always possible to write notes in detail from one generation to another.

Response: We'll think about it!

Mauno expanded his interview by writing comments to some of the pieces, while listening and watching the entire concert video recording:

This is what I wrote while listening [the rest of the pieces].

Precio de Festival

- sufficient information in the music score.
- however, not too much, freedom is kept, calls for communicating

### Bordo

- Music score “sticky notes”, very practical
- Intense rehearsals, being the best for the musicians!

### Espiritu Colombiano

- The rhythm is in the blood of the musicians (prepared to play traditional, “the village people are wise”)
- I did not get everything as a listener, but if I belonged to the band, it would be different

For the rest: I wrote Bravo!, to be added to everything!

### Summa summarum:

A new attitude in traditional music, and it worked. The musicians felt at ease, which is important in music making. Like in the modern system of artistic music, rhythms arise from traditions while the improvised sections were free and amusing. At least, that is how it felt right now. In fact, the way the notes were written, and the innovations, definitely establishes its focus.

As a contrasting interviewee, I contacted Cris Af Enehielm (b. 1954), recognized Finnish experimental artist who was present at the performance.

Cris Af Enehielm “(...) has worked as an actress in radio, television and film, as a visual artist, performance artist, singer, director, costume designer, set designer, educator and lecturer, and as teacher in acting at the Theatre Academy in Helsinki”, also “(...) She has been a member of several performance art and music groups; Homo\$, Jack Hellen Brut, Sarje ääni, Joan Bennet and the Museo och Transistors. As a member of performance and music groups, she has appeared on numeral international festivals and events (Sweden, Iceland, Denmark, Belgium, Egypt, Switzerland, Austria, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Macedonia, Poland, Russia and Hungary)” (*Cris Af Enehielm - Alchetron, the Free Social Encyclopedia*, 2024).

Her response was received through email in English.



These are the questions she answered:

- *As a concert attendee, which were your impressions throughout the performance?*
- *Would you consider that the outcome of this concert represents intercultural music or transcultural music expression? You don't need to agree with this, feel free to share your thoughts.*
- *Do you think that the performers could express their personal musical style or tradition, even though the Colombian music framework was the foundation of the compositions?*

Answers received on April 12, 2024

As a non-professional musician, I find it challenging to express any deep analysis of the different ideas in this big bouquet of different traditions and instruments.

The concert was all in all a celebration of rhythm, emotions, and all the colors different music can offer. It was a true evidence of how music can connect cultures and people from all over the world. The concert expressed, for example, the witness of African percussion traditions, the melancholy you can find in the Irish romantic tradition, and the feeling and romantic parts of Colombian traditions.

The different traditions' instruments were able in this concert to find themselves through Colombian music, which was the frame of the concert. It was fascinating to follow how these traditions recognize themselves through the point of view or frame.

Throughout the concert, with all its layers and moods, its expression of Colombian and Venezuelan tradition kept the red thread clear. However, it was colored and enriched in a creative way by the use of not typical instruments (from the Colombian tradition) and sounds from multiple musical traditions and cultures.

This made the overall experience into a very rich and stimulating entity filled with unexpected turns.

You could find yourself traveling over the world, yet staying true to the main musical tradition. For me, it was also a voyage of discovery that we

are connected through music. Therefore, the discovery held surprises, knowledge, recognition.

It was interesting how written and improvised parts smoothly worked together to strengthen and enrich each other. The concert is an example of a very organic way of cooperation, both between different artists and between composed and improvised expression. An organic way of understanding each other gave the whole concert a feeling of joy, playfulness, and power.

To your second question, I am not sure what to say, but I thought about intercultural music."

Even though only two interviews were done, I consider their answers to be deeply supported by the interviewees' extensive experience and artistic career contributing to the understanding of this research. My intention was to search for the perspective of Traditional Finnish music and artistic experimentation.

Answers described the performance as diverse cultures that showcased extraordinary talent, creating a unique atmosphere with vibrant and inspired music. From the audience's perspective, instruments of the multiplicity of traditions presented in the concert found harmony in Colombian music, coinciding with the concert's framework and research question. The concert exemplified organic cooperation between artists and composed versus improvised expressions, seamlessly integrating written and improvised parts.

Maunu's thoughts presented the challenge of capturing the fineness and sensitivity of traditional Finnish music through a musical notation system. He highlights the limitations and the importance of live performances and oral tradition for preserving musical traditions. However, the door was left open for experimenting with multiple musical notations towards traditional Finnish music.

For me his recognition of the effectiveness of the proposed notation used in the context of the master concert recital was rewarding.

### 4.3 Conclusions

To develop a music score in an intercultural context, the *musical-facilitator* must delve deeply into the musical notation to be implemented, as well as the cultural contexts and *cultural musical frames* of each participant involved in a project of this nature. Additionally, the *musical-facilitator* must provide proper tools that align with these cultural contexts, not only from a creative standpoint but also from a conceptual perspective, which are crucial to encourage an environment of intercultural collaboration. When attesting these tools for collaborative processes, the values of respect, understanding, support and shared ownership can have significant importance for the good development of a musical effort such as the one described in this research.

It is vital to consider the context of this project, as it is related to the preparation needed for the development of the actual musical notation. This type of notation does not rely on the logic of using a score to capture the various articulations and expressions of each instrument, genre to be interpreted, or to transmit the composer's artistic intension. Additionally, the use of a single method of musical notation system severely limits the traditional music diversity, as it does not allow the flexibility needed during traditional music performance. On the contrary, this notation proposal, includes several notation systems, and it is understood as a guide tool in the act of intercultural music collaboration.

The primary purpose of this proposed notation, from a conceptual aspect, is meant to be part of the tools required for a musical creation that considers the context of the performance, the interpreters' *cultural frames*, and allows the freedom for the intrinsic details of their artistic identity to appear. All these characteristics are related to the *general ontological matter* of the *materialistic philosophy*. 'M1' as the intercultural music notation proposal score, 'M2' to the social context of the performers and audience, and 'M3' reflected through the conceptual framework and methodologies implemented to achieve the artistic experience; the *transcendental ego*.

I am aware that the musical notation from a thematic concept such as this one, focusing on Colombian music, may meet conflicts due to the specific characteristics of this traditional music. Therefore, it would be informative to have further investigations of this nature in other cultural contexts and territories, perhaps employing other notation systems and compositional techniques workable for the specific context in which they will be implemented. In this way, the proposal outlined in this artistic research can be evaluated and changed based on the results obtained in diverse contexts.

I believe that this proposal can open the door to the emergence of musical proposals that can use a conceptual system based on innovative philosophical principles as a starting point. Besides, I feel that the contributions of this artistic research lean towards the concept of interculturality within the *cultural frames*. These principles can offer knowledge structures that project a reasoning from the plurality of concepts towards traditional artistic creation and its wide musical diversity. Individuals who read this work can grasp the essence of the concept, and significantly apply these ideas in other traditional music genres, both from a cultural essence and from the transformation of discourse into the realms of contemporary music.

Ultimately the response to the research question posed reveals possible notation alternatives, which can be substantiated throughout the body of this work. Focusing on presenting the structural elements of the piece through musical notation systems within the context of *cultural frames*, contributes to the enhancement of musical diversity. The importance of this lies in being able to approach concepts in music from plurality, seeking multiple forms of reinterpretation that can contribute to the development of intercultural collaboration in music.

I intent to continue this research in the context of Colombian and Hispano-American traditions, with the hope of proposing new ways of approaching musical creation and collaboration. I believe that developing musical projects that enhance the diversity of music, as presented in this text, could serve as a tool for social understanding. In countries like Colombia, social conflict has divided communities, creating serious harm to the society, sometimes irreversible. Learning to interact and communicate with contrasting social and cultural realities is crucial to acknowledging human differences. I dream that the continuation of this project can support the creation of social consensus towards supporting peace making processes in Colombia.



Image 8. Ensemble on stage 3. From left to right: Nicolás Castañeda Lozano (*Llanera* Harp), Sergio Castrillon (Prepared Cello), Pilar Zorro (Violin), Ana Lazar (Violin), Javier Navarro (Double Bass).

Photo by Maarit Kytöharju, Global Fest, Helsinki – Finland, 2023.

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## Appendices

### Espiritu Colombiano

Composer: Lucho Bermudez

**A** A7 A7

6 **B** A7

14 **C** Ana, Pilar, Ossi

18 Shafeeq, Mehrnoosh Ana, Pilar, Ossi Shafeeq, Mehrnoosh A7

Javier, Nicolás, Jodio Whole Band! Fill Marker

2

## Espiritu Colombiano

**D** Dm A7 Dm D7 Gm D7 Gm Em7(b5)

Ana, Pilar  
Shafeeq, Mehrnoosh

Ossi: Tama Comping using the melodic line!

João: Comp using Harmonic Rythmn  
(Comp.)

Pasillo Feel!  
Javier  
Markus

(Comp.) Shafeeq, Mehrnoosh

João

32 A7 Dm E7 Bb7(#11) A7

38 A7

Fill

**E** Dm A7 Eb7 Dm D7 Gm7 Ab7 Gm7

Shafeeq, Mehrnoosh  
Ana, Pilar

Ossi: Tama Comping using the melodic line!

(Comp.)

(Comp.) João Nicolás

The musical score is written for piano and percussion. It begins with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 2/4 time signature. The piano part is in the right hand, and the percussion part is in the left hand. The score is divided into sections by measure numbers 32 and 38. The first section (measures 1-31) includes chords Dm, A7, Dm, D7, Gm, D7, Gm, and Em7(b5). The second section (measures 32-37) includes chords A7, Dm, E7, Bb7(#11), and A7. The third section (measures 38-43) includes chords A7 and a 'Fill' instruction. The fourth section (measures 44-49) includes chords Dm, A7, Eb7, Dm, D7, Gm7, Ab7, and Gm7. The score includes performance instructions such as 'Ossi: Tama Comping using the melodic line!', 'João: Comp using Harmonic Rythmn (Comp.)', 'Pasillo Feel!', 'Javier', 'Markus', and '(Comp.) Shafeeq, Mehrnoosh'. The percussion part is indicated by diagonal lines in the left hand, suggesting a specific rhythmic pattern.

**Espiritu Colombiano**

3

51

A7 Dm E7 Bb7(#11)

52

F A7 Em7(b5) A7 A7 Dm G C7

Nicolás, Pilar Only

Javier, Nicolás, João

(Comp) Ana, Mehnoosh

63

F Em7(b5) A7 Dm Bb C7

Ana, Shafiq

João, Nicolás

João, Nicolás, Ossi

72

F Em7(b5) A7 Dm H Gm Dm A7

(Comp.) Shafiq, Mehnoosh

80

Dm Gm Dm A7 Dm Dm

1. 2.

The musical score is written for piano in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor). It consists of five systems of music. The first system (measures 51-54) features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system (measures 55-58) includes a key signature change to two flats (B-flat major or D minor) and a section for 'Nicolás, Pilar Only'. The third system (measures 59-62) continues the melody and bass line. The fourth system (measures 63-66) includes a section for 'Ana, Shafiq' and 'João, Nicolás, Ossi'. The fifth system (measures 67-70) includes a section for '(Comp.) Shafiq, Mehnoosh'. The sixth system (measures 71-74) continues the melody and bass line. The seventh system (measures 75-78) includes a section for 'Dm Gm Dm A7 Dm Dm'. The eighth system (measures 79-82) includes a section for '1. 2.' and a repeat sign.

4

Solo: *Shafiq* → *Mehrnoush* (2x) *Harmonica Bass solo* *Only on C#* *tutti*

*Pasillo Feel (Drumset only)* → *Bass rit!*

**I** **D** **B7**  
*Free Choices: You could Comp, play melodies!*

**J** **D**

**D7** **G** **Gm**

**D** **B7** **Em** **A7** **D** **A7** **D** **D** **A7** **D**

**K** **A7** **Back to Beginning!** **A7**

**Cantos y Sabana**

**Viento**  
 - Sol trasto  
 - Sol parrucillo  
 - Armonicos  
 - Col legno

**Paguros**  
 - Nitros agudos  
 - Ritmos cortos  
 - golpes a la caja

**Violines**

**Parrando**  
 - Libre utilización de patrones Rítmicos

**Carto de Vagueria**  
 desarrollar tema a partir de estos Motivos - Orden indeterminado

**Cello**  
 preparado

**Zapateo**

**Cueria**  
 - Ritmo Estable  
 - Sabroso

**Chamaquia**

**Agile**  
 "Viaje" de Improvisación Libre

**Arpa con Arco**

**Vacas**  
 - Sonidos resaca con el arpa en cuerdas bajas

**Caballo**  
 - Ritmos que imitan cabalgear

**Uete**  
 - Cuertados FFF

**Ting - Todos**

**Cue/Gnto** 1 2 3 4 5 6

**Comp**

**10-100**

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# Bordo!

Composer: Nicolás Castañeda Lozano

**A**

**DRUM FEEL** (Until Cue)

Em7 Cmaj7(#11) Em7

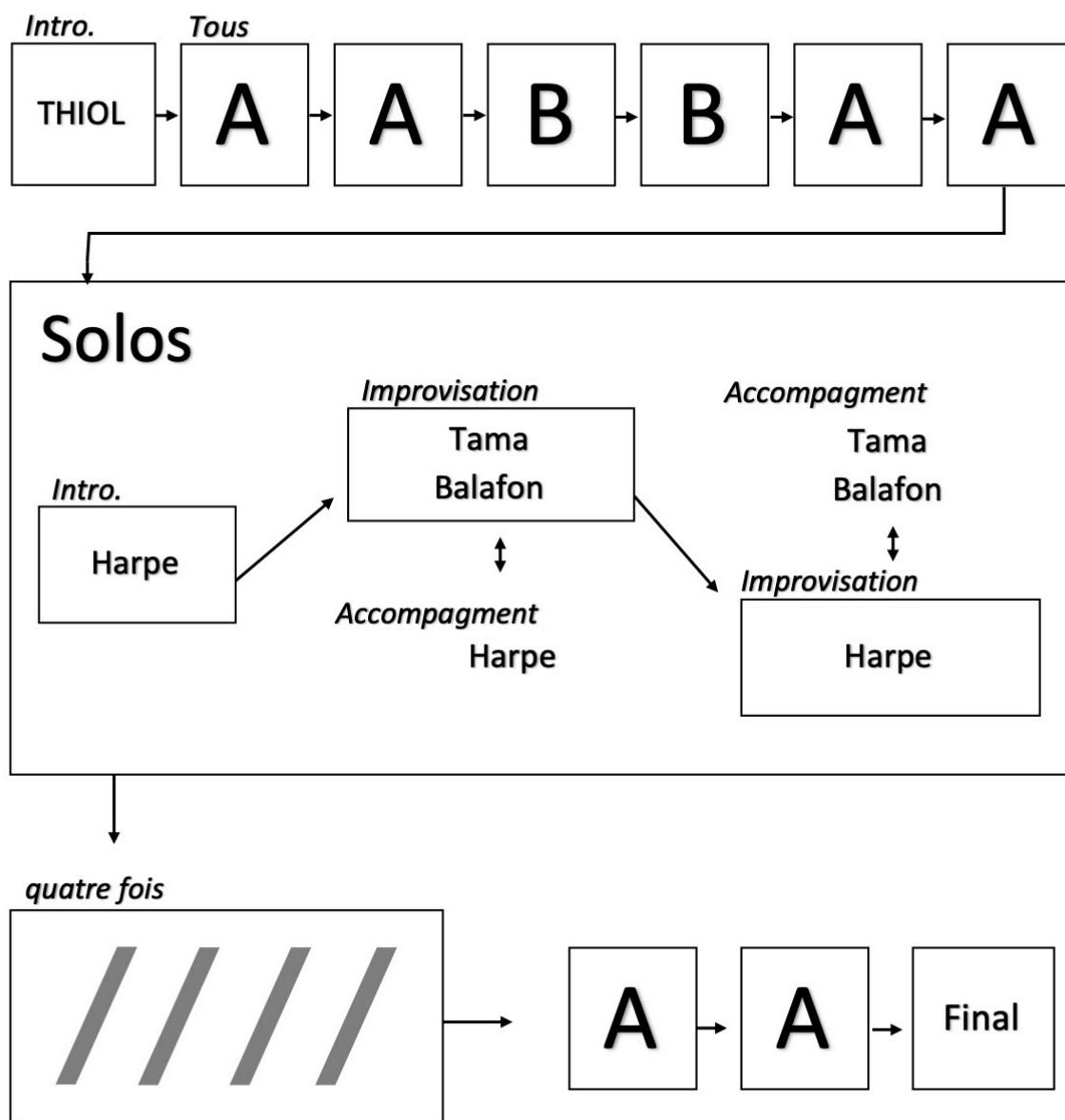
8 Cmaj7(#11) Em7 Am7 F#7(b5)

15 B7 F7 1. B7 2.

**B** G/C Bm

28 Am7 F#m7(b5) D7(13) D.S. al

Bordo!





Score **Un Eco en el Vasto Universo** Composer: Nicolás Castañeda Lozano

**A**

Violin I

Violin II

Santoor

Qanun

Harp

Vibraphone

Double Bass

Drum Set

Free interpretation with added ornaments

Free interpretation with added ornaments

mf

mf

Fill

The musical score is written for a full orchestra. It begins with a section marked 'A'. The Violin I and Violin II parts are in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. They are marked with 'Free interpretation with added ornaments' and 'mf'. The Santoor and Qanun parts are in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. The Harp part is in treble and bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. The Vibraphone part is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. The Double Bass part is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. The Drum Set part is in common time (C) and includes a 'Fill' section.

Un Eco en el Vasto Universo

2

**B**

*simile ...*  
**mf**  
*simile ...*  
**mf**

Vln. I

Vln. II

*Free interpretation with added ornaments*  
**mf**  
*Free interpretation with added ornaments*  
**mf**  
*Free interpretation with added ornaments*  
**mf**

Hp.

*Free interpretation with added ornaments*  
**mf**  
*Free interpretation with added ornaments*  
**mf**

Vib.

*Free interpretation with added ornaments*  
**mf**  
*Free interpretation with added ornaments*  
**mf**

D.B.

*(1x) Acompañamiento adlib, notas tangas*  
**mf** (2x) Acompañamiento de vals!  
 Vals... Con Morcilla!

D. S.

*(1x) Cymbals adlib.*  
**mf** (2x) Waltz

Chords: A mi6, C ma7(#11), D mi7, D mi7(b5), A mi7, D7, B7, E13, A mi7, A9, D mi7, F#7(b5), B mi7(b5), E73

# Un Eco en el Vasto Universo

3

**C** Expressive with dynamics/ Ensemble deep Listening!  
sul tasto.

**1.** **2.**

**Vln. I** **Vln. II**

**pp** Expressive with dynamics/ Ensemble deep Listening!  
sul pont.

**pp** Expressive with dynamics/ Ensemble deep Listening!

**pp** Expressive with dynamics/ Ensemble deep Listening!

**pp** Expressive with dynamics/ Ensemble deep Listening!

**3/1**

**Hp.**

**Bma7** **Gma7(#11)** **Dmi7** **Bmi6** **Ami(ma7)**

**Improvatation with Harp**

**Vib.**

**3/1**

**A mi7** **A mi7** **Bma7** **Gma7(#11)** **Dmi7** **Bmi6** **Ami(ma7)**

**D.B.**

**3/1**

**Fill** **Compimg - react to impro!**

**D. S.**

**p**



54

Vln. I

Vln. II

ord.

*mf* *express.*

54

Hp.

E7

Caug

Bdim7

A mi7(♭5)

C7

E7

54

Vib.

54

D.B.

E7

Caug

Bdim7

A mi7(♭5)

C7

E7

54

D.S.

Un Eco en el Vasto Universo

6

E

Free interpretation with added ornaments

Vln. I

Vln. II

Free interpretation with added ornaments

66

Free interpretation with added ornaments

Free interpretation with added ornaments

66

Free interpretation with added ornaments

Hp.

Free interpretation with added ornaments

66

Free interpretation with added ornaments

Vib.

D.B.

Vals. Con Morcilla!

mf

66

D. S.

mf

Waltz











Score

# Precio de Festival!

Composer: Nicolás Castañeda Lozano

**A** First Time only (y) starts. Second time (x) Harp (z) Vibraphone join / Seul le premier temps (y) démarre. Deuxième fois (x) Harpe (z) Vibraphone rejoint

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

X

Y

Z

*mf*

*Fill*

*Cumbia Feel 2nd repeat/Cumbia Feel 2ème répétition  
without Bass*

**B** Bass joins by playing the melodic line. Cumbia Feel (percussion) / La basse rejoint en jouant la ligne mélodique. Cumbia Feel (percussions)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

X

Y

Z

*mf*

*Fill*

**C** Keep up in Cumbia! Bass comp using the cumbia clave, using the first note of the interval in (y). Y can either use tremolo or keep with the previous comping  
Continuez à Cumbia! Composition de basse utilisant la cumbia clave, en utilisant la première note de l'intervalle en (y). Vous pouvez soit utiliser le trémolo, soit conserver la composition précédente.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

X

Y

Z

*mf*

*Simile*

*Bass plays*

*Fill*

2

Precio de Festival!

**D**

Cumbia Feel! Bass keeps comping using cumbia clave. X melody can be played by one violin.  
 Sentez-vous la Cumbia ! Bass continue d'utiliser la cumbia clave. La mélodie X peut être jouée par un seul violon.

Handwritten musical score for measures 1-6. The score is for three parts: X (Violin), Y (Piano), and Z (Bass). The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The bass line (Z) features a cumbia clave pattern. The violin (X) and piano (Y) parts have melodic lines.

Handwritten musical score for measures 7-12. The score is for three parts: X (Violin), Y (Piano), and Z (Bass). The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The bass line (Z) continues the cumbia clave pattern. The violin (X) and piano (Y) parts have melodic lines. The section ends with a "Fill" in each part.

**E SOLOS**

Open!

Handwritten musical score for the "SOLOS" section. It features four wavy lines representing solos, labeled Solo 1, Solo 2, Solo 3, and Solo 4. Below the solos is a handwritten musical notation: Cumbia Feel ||: Dm | 7. | Eb | 7. | Cm7(b9) | 7. | Dm | 7. ||. An arrow points from this notation to a box containing the text "ON CUE!".

**F PERCUSSION SOLO! / PERCUSSIONS SOLO**

Handwritten musical score for the "PERCUSSION SOLO!" section. The score is for two parts: Y (Piano) and Z (Bass). The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The piano part (Y) has a melodic line. The bass part (Z) has a cumbia clave pattern. The section ends with a "UNTIL CUE / jusqu'au signal" and "Percussion Only / Percussions Uniquement" instruction.

## Precio de Festival!

3

**G**

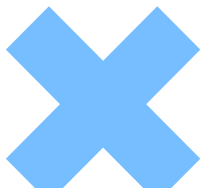
Cumbia Feel! Bass plays melody / Other melodic instruments play one voice.. Free choice!

Sentez-vous la Cumbia ! La basse joue de la mélodie / Les autres instruments mélodiques jouent d'une seule voix. Libre choix !

1.

106 2.

112 Rit. -----



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## Consent for use of personal data

### Consent to participate in the research: TITLE

I have understood that participation is voluntary, and at any point in the research I am at liberty to notify the researcher that I no longer wish to participate in the study.

- ☐ I want to participate in the artistic research as an expert/artist/composer, and I want the information to be published including my name.
- ☐ I want to participate in the artistic research project anonymously.
- ☐ I give permission related to the law of copyright to use my piece of art/performance as a part of the research.
- ☐ I give permission related to the law of copyright to show my piece of art/performance publicly.
- ☐ I want to be identified as the author of my piece of art/performance
- ☐ I want my piece of art/performance to be published unnamed.

I have received sufficient information about the research project. I have understood the information and I wish to participate in the research study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of research participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email address

### Researcher's Contact details:

Name

Email

Phone

Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki

Global Music Department  
Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki

#### CONSENT FORM FOR AN INTERVIEW

This form confirms that I give consent for my participation in an interview for the bachelor / master project by **Nicolas Castañeda Lozano** as part of their bachelor / master's degree in Global Music, Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki.

The central focus of the bachelor / master project is developing a musical script that enhances intercultural communications based on the experiences of Beyond Tradition Master concert, as a case study analysis.

The interview will be recorded and transcribed. Information given during the interview will be treated confidentially and it will not be used for any other purpose than the research concerned, and potential presentations or articles related to it. Parts of the interview may be quoted anonymously within the research. The anonymity of the interviewee will be protected, and the research data will be stored securely after the research has been completed. On completion of the project, the recordings and the codes to the interviewees will be destroyed. Transcripts of the interview will be stored securely for up to five years and thereafter destroyed or filed to an archive. The researcher is committed to follow the responsible conduct of research by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity and the Code of Conduct of the University of the Arts Helsinki.

The interviewer has informed me on the issues above and I agree to participate in the interview and study voluntarily. I can withdraw my consent at any given time by contacting the researcher, Nicolas Castañeda Lozano, but the data collected up to the withdrawal may be utilized in the research. In case I have any questions concerning this interview or the research, I can also contact by e-mail **Nicolas Castañeda Lozano**, nicolas.castaneda.lozano@uniarts.fi or phone: +18572224074

In the case of the interview being conducted online, consent is given by replying to this email.

The researcher has provided me with sufficient information on the research and the use of personal data and I have had a chance to ask for details on any issues.

Place and Date

---

Interviewee Name and Signature

---