"Musical Smiles": The Cuban Contradanza and its Impact on Latin American Music

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ABSTRACT


This study examines the influence of the Cuban contradanza, paying special interest on the lives of two Cuban figures who advanced the form most: Manuel Saumell (1818-1870) and Ignacio Cervantes (1847-1905). The document will begin with an introduction to Cuba in the nineteenth century in order to learn about the environment in which these two composers were forged. Next, the history of the contradanza will be assessed, detailing how the dance was performed and how the music was structured. Following this, the lives of Saumell and Cervantes will be detailed, from their biographies and training to the danzas which they wrote. This study will also assess the impact of the contradanza throughout the Caribbean, United States, and elsewhere.
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Chapter 1: Introduction to Cuba and the Contradanza

The Cuban contradanza began its development during the nineteenth century and over time blossomed into a nationalist form, embodying the struggle of Cubans for independence from Spain and capturing a growing national pride. In its lifetime, the dispersal of the contradanza around the island of Cuba aided its inhabitants in their own identity. No longer would they see themselves simply as a colonial Spanish outpost in the middle of the Caribbean Sea; they would embrace each other and become Cuban. During the rise and prominence of this musical form, several composers wrote in the form, with two standing out above all others in their understanding of the Cuban musical idiom: Manuel Saumell Robredo (1818-1870) and Ignacio Cervantes Kawanagh (1847-1905). These two men, though very different in their biographies, pioneered the contradanza form, taking it from its rudimentary beginning to a high-octane musical form fit the concert hall. This document will discuss the happenings on the island of Cuba during the time of Saumell and Cervantes, analyze the history and origin of the contradanza as a musical form as and a dance, then detail the lives and compositional history of both Saumell and Cervantes. Subsequently, a global study of the contradanza will be presented, showing the long-lasting impact of the musical ideas around the Caribbean and into the United States. The impact of the Cuban rhythms, which form the basis of the contradanza, was also present in some popular music in Japan in the early decades of the twentieth century. This musical trajectory will also be assessed. Finally, there will be a brief discussion of the importance of diversity of musical knowledge and study. The Cuban contradanza has a long history, and following the lives of Saumell and Cervantes, it took root in a host of nations all throughout the Western hemisphere.
Cuba in the Nineteenth Century

What was Cuba like in the time of Saumell and Cervantes? This question is essential to understanding how and why the contradanza would come to be so important in the island’s culture. Of course, at this time Cuba was not an independent nation; it was a colony under the rule of Spain. In the decades preceding Saumell’s compositions, the island was undergoing rapid changes in its economy and culture. These changes would foreshadow the rise of a new Cuban nationalism, and the introduction of the contradanza into this environment would allow Cubans to see themselves as no longer a distant Spanish colony. They would begin to yearn for freedom from colonial rule. Many attempts would be made to achieve this end during the nineteenth century, and Cuba would receive some international help in her struggle for freedom. Music would serve as both a unifying and galvanizing force in this way. Into this environment, the contradanza bore its great effect.

Figure 1.1. Map of the Island of Cuba
Colonial Cuba and its Music

Cuba’s colonization began in 1514 under the Spanish; they eventually set up a port in what would become the city of Havana.¹ Time worked wonders in developing what was a rudimentary outpost for the Spaniards into a bold, beautiful country. In the nineteenth century, the island grew in a multitude of ways: economically, musically, and culturally. Unrest in other colonies in the Caribbean brought an influx of refugees to Cuba and the surrounding region. Refugees from nearby Haiti would be cast as far away as Boston, Massachusetts, and to the southern United States. Most went to Cuba, the nearest nation to their own. Their arrivals began around 1803, with about half settling in Santiago de Cuba and others going to other eastern cities, including Guantánamo and Baracoa.² In the west, Havana became home to a more aristocratic populous, with musical events livening up the city. Also in 1803, and in advance of a host of other Caribbean nations, musical publications circulated around the island. In this year, the first ever contradanza, “San Pascual Bailón” was published (this important milestone will be discussed in greater detail subsequently). The advent of musical publications and instruments created a new musical culture and market in Cuba, as did the introduction of the pianoforte to Havana in 1810. The first musical academy was created in 1814, and another, the St. Cecelia Academy of Music, was founded in Havana in 1816.³

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³ Alejo Carpentier, Music in Cuba, trans. by Alan West-Durán (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 166-8.
Havana eventually became the capital city of Cuba, but it was by no means the only city that would grow in importance during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The coastal city of Matanzas, and the province of the same name, also became significant during Cuba’s colonial history. The importance of sugar to the island’s economy grew the city into an economic and cultural center. The Spanish opened a port in Matanzas in 1795, as the number of sugar mills increased exponentially in the previous fifty years. The advent of steam engines and railroads to Cuba in the 1830s also furthered its industrial prowess.4

Musical and theatre performance commenced in Cuba from as early as the eighteenth century, with the first theatre opening in Havana in 1776. Other cities also provided entertainment for both colonizers and the general public at this time, bringing together music and dance for public enjoyment. One of the greatest contributions to this burgeoning field of entertainment would come from Captain General Miguel Tacón (1775-1855), who served as Governor of Cuba from 1834-1838. In his term, Tacón instituted significant reforms to the island, particularly in the area of infrastructure. He ordered its cities to be cleansed, improved hygiene, paved streets, and the digging of canals and sewers. Tacón also ordered the construction of the Teatro Tacón, and this led to the onset of Cuban musical theater. At its grand opening on 18 February 1838, nearly 7000 attendees flooded the theater, far surpassing its 3000-seat capacity.5

4 Sublette, *Cuba and its Music*, 126, 131. The increased exportation of sugar from Cuba also required an increase in the importation of enslaved Africans to the island. The dark heritage of slavery impacted the musical trajectory of the island for decades, and bears mentioning in any context where the New World is discussed.

5 Sublette, *Cuba and its Music*, 128-9. Tacón’s reforms extended to the construction of the largest jail in Latin America, modeled after those in the United States. He also created a police force, which purged the city of criminals. His massive infrastructure development plan was loosely modeled on the plan implemented for Washington, D.C., which demonstrates the growing links between the United States and Cuba.
The Sugar Industry and its Vitality to Cuba

Cuba’s superpower in its colonial history was its agricultural prowess. Its major exports made a substantial impact in both its economic development and its cultural growth. Beginning in the 1520s, sugar formed the backbone of all economic activity in Cuba, and this continued well into the nineteenth century, where it would reach its zenith. Sugar was the main crop in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.\(^6\) At the beginning of the nineteenth century, through this economic output, Cuba began to grow considerably. Capital flowed into Cuba from all around the Caribbean and North America. Cane fields sprouted throughout the island, in the west in Havana and Matanzas, and in the east as well.\(^7\) With this boom in exportation, Cuba gradually became less of a colonial stop-over and more of a true colony. Havana grew into an economic center, and no longer simply a pass-through port.

In addition to the importance of sugar, the introduction of coffee to Cuba also went a long way into forging the island’s economic development. In 1748 a French planter introduced this crop to the island, and it took off in growth and popularity. By the end of the eighteenth century, Havana’s first newspaper printed a recipe for brewing coffee. Following the Haitian Revolution in the 1790s, the influx of refugees increased the popularity of the crop in Cuba. Coffee plantations increased in Cuba’s eastern provinces, where the majority of Haitian refugees settled. Plantations became a hub for cultural creativities. Owners held elegant soirees there, as they had done in Haiti. At such events, Black musicians played in musical ensembles that featured a wide array of instruments, including violins, harps, cellos, and flutes. After the introduction of the

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\(^6\) Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes,” 11.

\(^7\) Sublette, *Cuba and its Music*, 112.
pianoforte in Cuba, these ensembles would be augmented and improved. All these musical novelties came about due to the agricultural advancement of the island, and in places like these the musical identity of Cuba began to be forged.

It was this booming sugar industry that would forge closer relations between Cuba and its near neighbor, the United States. After the Haitian Revolution caused that island’s sugar industry to collapse, Cuba filled the resultant vacuum, expanding its exports all the way up the eastern seaboard of the U.S. and into the Gulf Coast. These ties strengthened over the rest of the nineteenth century, drawing Cuba closer to the West and further from its Spanish colonizers. This proceeded until the collapse of the sugar industry in 1886, which was spurred by the abolition of slavery in the same year. These close contacts with the U.S. likely also spurred the already present desire for Cuba to break free from Spain’s colonial hold, and a quiet insurgency percolated under the surface for much of the nineteenth century, until it could no longer be stifled.

Roiling Undercurrents of Independence

Colonial Cuba was growing rapidly between 1790 and 1839, and as the wealth generated by the island grew, its citizens began to feel increasing dissatisfaction and distrust with their colonial overlords. Indeed, a majority of the wealth being created on the island was being sent back to Spain, in spite of the growing Cuban culture and literature scene. Education on the island was improving, and this fact brought forth the realization that Spain was serving as more of a

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9 Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes,” 12, 18.
national hindrance than a help. Cuba began to align more closely with the United States and England, as these two nations were the greatest recipients of Cuban goods.\textsuperscript{10}

Recurrent insurrections within Cuba increased the threat of colonial governmental overthrow at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. Upon the beginning of the Haitian Revolution in 1791, Spain sought to lower its own risk of Cubans reaching for their own revolution. To this end, they imported white laborers to Cuba in 1794, alongside a great increase of slave labor to accommodate the booming sugar and coffee industry.\textsuperscript{11} These attempts at quashing potential insurrections demonstrated Spain’s determination not to release their Caribbean income source. They had good reason to be concerned, for the beginning of the nineteenth century saw a great decimation of the Spanish Empire in the New World. Their colonial empire was in pieces: Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador were all free from Spain within the first two decades of the century (in 1811, 1819, and 1820, respectively). Mexico was independent in 1821; Haiti would take over the Spanish-controlled Dominican Republic in 1822; Peru was liberated in 1824. Spain was relegated to control of but two Caribbean territories: Cuba and Puerto Rico.\textsuperscript{12}

These independent tensions would certainly bear an effect on Cubans. They had little say in the goings-on in their national lives. Their economy was regulated by Spain, and their proceeds largely went to Spain, an ocean away. Cubans themselves wielded precious little political power, and with this realization reformist political entities would begin to form. Unrest and anger over unfair treatment ultimately resulted in the Ten Years’ War (1868-1878), with

\textsuperscript{10} Sublette, \textit{Cuba and its Music}, 126.

\textsuperscript{11} Sublette, \textit{Cuba and its Music}, 111.

\textsuperscript{12} Sublette, \textit{Cuba and its Music}, 126-7.
skirmishes breaking out between Cuban separatists and the Spanish regime. Despite the righteous intent of the separatists, most of the battles were centered in Eastern Cuba in provinces like Camagüey and Santiago de Cuba; the war was not supported in the larger western cities of Havana and Matanzas. This lack of wide-scale participation made these skirmishes easy for the Spanish to squash. At its end, Cuba remained firmly under Spanish control. While this effort may have been unsuccessful, it represented the first time Cubans would seek national independence. It would be far from the last; indeed, this was simply the opening salvo in the struggle for independence.

After 1878, rebels on the island tried for a second time to achieve liberty from the domineering Spanish. Only one year after the Ten Years’ War would come the Little War (or Guerra Chiquita, 1879-1880). Here, as before, the rebels were put down once more by the Spanish, but this smaller scrape preceded the final campaign for Cuba’s freedom. The Cuban War of Independence (1895-1898) finally did what the two prior conflicts had failed to do. Beginning in February 1895, the great majority of the insurgent activity was once more centered in the eastern provinces: Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo. The United States would join in this effort in 1898, at first by providing the Cuban rebels with weapons and fighters. However, after the somewhat mysterious explosion of the USS Maine, U.S. President William McKinley declared war on Spain, prompted greatly by an enraged public and pro-war journalism. Both entities — the enraged public and a near-militant press — attributed the explosion to Spanish aggression.

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13 Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes,” 16-18. The western provinces were mostly populated by wealthy, elite Spaniards, and for them an independent Cuba was naturally be adversarial to their interests. Their upward mobility would likely be restricted or even equalled by cultural Cubans, people of color, and lower class members. This resistance explains the reticence of the western involvement in the Ten Years’ War.
toward the West. With aid from the United States in this manner, Spain was defeated, losing full control of not only Cuba, but Puerto Rico as well.\textsuperscript{14} Cuba’s liberation from the Spanish was at last permanently assured.

This history is extremely relevant to the development of the contradanza as a musical form. Music and culture are always on the frontlines of nationalism, and this was no different in the nineteenth century on the island of Cuba. As the decades passed, and as nationalism increased, the contradanza would become one of the major forms of national pride and resistance in music. The integration of Afro-Cuban elements into western European musical forms would mark it as a Cuban form. By doing so, the contradanza came to denote a strong Cuban identity. Through the contradanza, Cuba began to create a new national identity, as all countries do. She would begin to separate herself from colonial Spain, and see a greater integration of ethnicities into music and culture. The contradanza grew in significance and spread all around the Caribbean. In this process, it would take on various iterations, with different countries adding their own features to it. This would result in inconsistency in its descriptors.

The Trouble with Terminology

Throughout the Caribbean, and during the rise of the contradanza musical complex, there would be a frustratingly inconsistent usage of the terminology used to describe the new genre. Its eventual evolution and dissemination would be marked by this inconsistency. Some of the terms, like “contradanza,” “danza,” and “quadrille” could be used to define both the form and style of music and a type of dance. The meaning would be determined by its context. Other terms like

\textsuperscript{14} Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes,” 21-23.
“merengue” and “tango” could also be used in this way. In the Spanish Caribbean, “danza” might describe a specific type of music or could simply be a translation for the word “dance.” Similarly, the term cuadrilla (Spanish for “quadrille”) could denote a specific dance, the formation of four dancers together, or even a dance suite, as the contradanza could have been.15

Of the terms mentioned above, the terms “contradanza” and “danza” bear the greatest importance in the study and analysis of Cuban music in the nineteenth century. In Cuba, both of these terms could have been used interchangeably, and with a great degree of inconsistency. There seemed to have been a slight division between them, however. The works of Saumell tended to be more likely described as “contradanzas.” In the middle of the nineteenth century and through to its conclusion, “danza” would supplant that term to denote the prevailing musical features of the time. Cervantes would use this term more than Saumell, and as the century ended “danza” would more accurately describe what the musical genre had come to be. Elsewhere in the Caribbean, the terms were also used somewhat loosely. In Puerto Rico, the term “contradanza” would describe the older Spanish-style group dances. Their couples dance, arising in the 1840s, would be known initially as “merengues” and later as “danzas.” The word “merengue” would also be used in both Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and its meaning also shifted as the decades progressed.16 While the meanings of the terms may have evolved and changed over the years, dance and music were of paramount importance all throughout the Caribbean. The development of the Cuban contradanza complex is of great value and importance, and its offshoots can be seen all around Latin America.


16 Peter Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 9.
In the chapters which will follow, all these aspects will be studied. The origin of the contradanza will be traced, as will its entrance into Cuban culture. The elevation of the contradanza came primarily under the pens of Manuel Saumell and Ignacio Cervantes, and along with a few other major composers the genre and its rhythms would disperse widely, both within the Caribbean and into Europe. Its reach spread even further, entering even into Asia. The variance and proliferation of the contradanza’s rhythm is utterly remarkable, allowing its entrance into the musical tradition of a host of nations, including the United States. Indeed, these rhythms and musical patterns shaped a wide array of American musical genres. This evolution will also be looked at. While each country was able to place its own unique stamp on the musical figuration, its origin can be traced back to Cuba. Cuba served as the progenitor for many of the music traditions and especially the rhythms that can be seen in a great majority of the Caribbean nations.
Chapter 2: The History and Origin of the Contradanza

The history of the contradanza bears significance in its entrance into the Caribbean. A multitude of forces would impact the dance as it came across from Europe to Latin America. Cultures would clash and fuse, creating an all-new form that retained elements from its original form and adopted new ones. The contradanza would invade Cuba at first, weaving itself into a newly developing national fabric. From there, it would disperse all throughout the Caribbean islands and Central American nations, and in its spread each nation would adapt it while retaining the melded historical ideals.

History and Origin

The European contradanza was known in Cuba already by the end of the eighteenth century, and alongside the minuet was the favorite dance in the salons in the Spanish colonies of the Caribbean; in Cuba, the cities of Havana and Santiago de Cuba were on the front lines in receiving the dance form. The eventual importation of this dance into Latin America held great appeal to a wide swath of the populous, seeping into the upper classes and the lower classes, entering the dance halls of the rich and the street halls of the villages. Socioeconomic barriers disappeared under the influence of the contradanza, and as the nineteenth century continued it was thoroughly embraced as a part of the Cuban national identity.¹

The contradance originated in Western Europe, and had particular significance in England and France. Near the end of the sixteenth century, the rise of the middle class propelled this form further and wider than it had as a courtly dance for elite members of society. The middle class

developed an enjoyment for dancing in groups, and the contradance became a favorite, given it granted people opportunities to dance. There is some evidence the form was at first born in England, but only when it crossed into the European continent would it grow and blossom. Indeed, the iteration which grew out of France would be the variation which spread the contradance around the Caribbean. Increasing popularity allowed for the contradance to be considered truly French; indeed, the French bore a great deal of influence in the Caribbean indeed, holding many colonies and territories. For Cuba, it was the arrival of Haitian refugees into the island which brought this French contradanza. This was the first musical genre in Cuba to be rapidly diffused throughout the Caribbean and Latin America. Black French-Haitians played an important role in the formation of Cuban music; their rhythmic elements were further integrated into a host of musical genres in Cuba.

The contradanza, born in England and infused with a French aesthetic, would therefore make its way to the Caribbean. The dance was good-natured and lively. The most important aspect of the dance was the fact that it did not require a great deal of choreographic abilities, perfect for lower and middle class members who barely had time to learn special dance moves or distinguished figurations. The fact that this new dance did not require special teaching in highly complex steps allowed for the contradanza to spread quickly and widely in Cuba.

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3 Alejo Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, trans. Alan West-Durán (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 147-8. Such genres as the criolla, guajira, danzón, and clave were derived from the Cuban contradanza. Later chapters will discuss this evolution in greater detail.


Caribbean and the New World, colonialism was the main vehicle for the importation of the contradance. As the eighteenth century ended, many European and African dances — along with others — entered the region and took hold there. In the Spanish Caribbean, the contradanza first appeared around the late 1700s, and during its life it utilized musical figures from Europe and took on new contexts unique to the Caribbean nations it was entering.\(^6\)

The rhythmic character of the burgeoning contradanza was changed by its entrance into Latin America. This came largely due to the impact of Black people in the New World. The majority of music makers in the Latin American colonies were Black (both enslaved and freed people). They naturally sought to give music their own special flavor and character. The dance itself was not readily able to be changed in the area of form, so these musicians turned to the rhythms to satisfy their personal interests. In probably the most evocative example, what was the traditional European bass line — four even 8th notes — was transformed into what would ultimately become known as the tango rhythm: a dotted 8th and a 16th note, followed by two eighth notes (visualized below). This change was enthusiastically embraced by the Cuban public.

\[\begin{align*}
\text{traditional European bass line} & \quad \rightarrow \\
\text{newly created Cuban tango/habanera rhythm}
\end{align*}\]

Figure 2.1. The creation of the tango/habanera rhythm.

\(^6\) Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 10, 13. The impact of colonization further allowed for the contradanza to mirror another dance familiar to Black Americans, the calenda.
In addition, new rhythms entered Cuba from its neighbor Haiti. These new rhythms would first be introduced and accepted primarily in eastern Cuban provinces, then would drift westward. All together, a fully realized Cuban contradanza form was developing.\textsuperscript{7}

The contradanza flourished in the eastern provinces of Cuba as well, fostering a more distinctly mixed, creole culture than the western parts of the island. Some debate exists as to whether or not there were differing styles of the contradanza based on geographic region of the island, between the east in Santiago de Cuba and the west in Havana. Verifiable evidence to support this hypothesis is scant, leaving the question not fully resolved. In any case, it is clear that the Franco-Haitian influx in the east of Cuba stimulated the flowering of the contradanza in the east; in the west, the middle of the nineteenth century saw the contradanza become greatly prominent in Havana, and there it ultimately surpassed the influence born in Santiago de Cuba.\textsuperscript{8} Havana hosted the contradanza’s development, but this development was clearly influenced and enhanced by the spirit of the east, where a majority of Haitian refugees settled.

\textbf{The Contradanza in Cuban Society}

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the island of Cuba was undergoing immense economical and cultural changes. The island’s economy was growing exponentially, and this would widen the distance between Cuban culture and that of their Spanish colonizers. The island’s population was also growing, most markedly among individuals born on the island of Cuba yet bearing Spanish heritage. This new environment went a long way in creating a new and

\textsuperscript{7} Fernández, “La Contradanza Cubana y Manuel Saumell,” 117.

\textsuperscript{8} Manuel, \textit{Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean}, 52-4.
unique Cuban identity, and as with all nations, the arts sat on the vanguard this new national identity. In music, visual art, and theater, this growing national identity impacted what citizens were seeing, watching, listening to, and even reading. The importance of sugar exportation, Cuba’s major economic engine, coupled with the influence of the abhorrent slave trade also impacted culture and customs. The process of nationalism in Cuba provided the framework for the establishment of the contradanza as a nationalist expression. The majority of musicians on the island were Black, and it was their highly localized version of the contradanza that embedded into Cuban culture. In the nineteenth century, as political unrest grew on an island longing for independence from Spanish rule, the contradanza became a socio-political barometer of national sentiment. The rise of the contradanza was aided as well by the introduction and growth of the printing industry; indeed, the first ever published musical work on the island would be a contradanza, coming at the very start of the nineteenth century, in 1803.

Almost any form of music entering the Cuban zeitgeist could be transformed and used for dance, and dancing would become a craze on the island. Given the newfound prosperity on the island — brought about by the booming sugar industry — dance proliferated, with young upper-class men finding outlets for their frustrations in the company of free-wheeling dancers, in particular women of color. In the early urban periodical El Regañón (The Scold, 1800-1802), author Pascual Ferrer (1772-1851) wrote of nearly fifty dances occurring daily in Havana. Dancers reached levels of “almost madness” according to Ferrer, carrying on in their soirées well into the nights. Dances would be held in private homes, replete with refreshments and games.

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This description clearly shows that dance and music were not only used for performance in the early years of the nineteenth century; it was truly an outlet for cultural expression. Dance was thoroughly integrated into the Cuban society. These trends bore great significance in the furtherance of the contradanza in the future.

As previously mentioned, the advent of music publication on the island of Cuba worked wonders in the expansion of the contradanza. In fact, music printing expanded in Cuba before almost all its Caribbean neighbors. Around the 1830s, the publication of piano scores, and in particular the printing of contradanzas, was scattered through a host of newspapers and fledgling music journals. Activities like this generated a lively musical world for amateur musicians, which grew in parallel to that of the professionals in composition and performance. Visitors to the island of Cuba in the nineteenth century chronicled the growing musical culture, highlighting especially the influence and importance of dance on the island. The music of this era transcended age, race, and class, and dancing could take place in a variety of venues, from private homes to the formal concert halls to public dance halls.\(^\text{11}\) The contradanza (and later, danza) hence became deeply integrated into Cuban musical life, and was readily adopted by almost all its hearers. Local musicians gladly embraced the form, incorporating their tunes into music on street corners, where they were played all through the day and night. Contradanzas were primarily considered dance music, but the publishing industry allowed for amateurs to try out the contradanzas in their own homes. The popularity of the contradanza during the early decades of the nineteenth century began to ingrain the dance form into the Cuban psyche, and contributed to the growth of a new

\(^{10}\) Sublette, *Cuba and its Music*, 113.

\(^{11}\) Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 58.
national identity. National pride elevated the contradanza, allowing it to become the primary representation of the burgeoning Cuban culture. Not only was the contradanza coming to represent the island’s culture in these early years, it also began to break down barriers of race and class, transcending social classes in its wake.\textsuperscript{12} Other musical genres and dances, such as the quadrille, square dance, cotillion, and rigadón, were ultimately absorbed into the contradanza, forming a contradanza complex.\textsuperscript{13} This musical envelopment allowed for the contradanza to stand as the premiere musical form for almost the entirety of the nineteenth century.

The capital city of Havana hosted a lively entertainment scene from back in the sixteenth century all the way through its colonial period. The nineteenth century saw this cultural scene rise to great heights, likely prompted by both the massive influx of refugees from the Haitian Revolution and the collapse of sugar exportation in Haiti, granting Cuba the ability to subsume that industry. Wealthy patrons from this time and going forward led regular performances of chamber music, and the importation of new musical instruments would enhance the music scene on the island as well. Havana would not be the only city that would see this musical blossoming. The nearby port city of Matanzas also grew into a cultural center, as did the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba. In the latter city, there was an infusion of a “French connection” given the influx of Haitians to that region beginning at the start of the 1800s. Here, music chroniclers cited both the contradanza and the danza as centering focal points of musical life throughout the city, and the contradanza was further heard in both formal and informal settings.\textsuperscript{14}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Manuel, \textit{Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean}, 59-62.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Sublette, \textit{Cuba and its Music}, 132.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Manuel, \textit{Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean}, 57, 59.
\end{itemize}
The Contradanza, for Dancers

Dancing was an essential part of the daily life of Cubans in the nineteenth century. Dance halls popped up all over the island, and in these days the formation of the Cuban creole identity was developing. There was little need for any formal occasion to prompt a dance to be held. Cubans from all walks of life could engage in it. In the countryside, dances were held in farmhouses and even in slave barracks. In the cities and urban centers, dances were thrown by the elites in the upper classes, undertaken in luxurious settings, where freed Black women and white men danced together. The contradanza was danced in Cuba in the style of the French near the end of the eighteenth century, in a similar way as it was danced in Europe. Havana embraced the dance form, and from here it dispersed all about the island, from the west in Havana to the east in Santiago de Cuba.

How exactly, then, was the contradanza danced? Because the dance originated in Europe, it is first critical to understand how it was performed there; its subsequent entrance to the Caribbean necessitated changes that allowed for its transplantation into the New World. In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, the contradance (or “country dance”) could be danced in a circle, a square with two or four couples, or in a longways format, wherein men and women would face each other in two lines. The dances were social affairs, and many versions did not require any elite training or special steps. After lining up, specific dance sequences were performed, with each lasting about eight measures of music. The longways style of the contradance drifted from France to Spain, and through colonization entered Haiti and the wider

Spanish Caribbean. Its moods could vary from elegant and stylish to raucous and wild, placing it in stark contrast to the more reserved minuet. Over time, the contradance supplant the minuet in the Caribbean.\textsuperscript{17} As with all things, transplantation of any form or genre into a different country or culture allows for it to be changed, and the same occurred when the contradance came to Cuba and the Caribbean. In Cuba, an opening \textit{paseo} was added at the beginning, serving as an introduction to both invite dancers to come to the floor, and to further allow dancers to array themselves in formation. The \textit{paseo} was then repeated until the floor was full; at this point, the dance would kick off in earnest. In the Cuban contradanza, the \textit{paseo} could recur throughout the piece, allowing a brief rest for the dancers, vital in the Caribbean heat. Over time, more changes came as new styles came into vogue, and these changes dramatically altered the old tradition, in effect pushing them out. Newer formations of the dance allowed for individual couple dancing instead of the longways lines. Couples were more than willing to hold and embrace each other on the dance floor, often quite intimately. These changes were, naturally, not readily or happily accepted by traditionalists, who condemned the increase in sensuality and irreverence. With couples now sensually whispering and holding each other in this amorous manner, offended moralists derided the dancers with chants of “¡que haya luz!” — “let there be light [showing between you]!” Of course, this opposition in no way derailed the spread of the new contradanza.\textsuperscript{18} Modern dancers would probably find the dance steps required for the contradanza somewhat stiff. These steps would, however, form the most prominent step configuration of the

\textsuperscript{17} Manuel, \textit{Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean}, 4-5.

\textsuperscript{18} Manuel, \textit{Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean}, 14.
day in Cuba. Couples dancing in double file executed the steps at the direction of a bastonero, or dance caller. Men and women faced each other in line, with the first couple on one end beginning the steps. Subsequent couples in line picked up these steps, until all were dancing in motion together. The steps were simple and could easy be shifted between meters and times. In Havana, Caribbean immodesty supplanted the stuffiness of the European contradance, allowing for the moves to be faster and more irreverent. Cubans voraciously threw themselves into the dance, carrying on well into the night on occasion. The somewhat sedate European minuet was now eschewed in favor of the more liberal contradanza, which conservative detractors bitterly lamented. Integration of the European form into the Caribbean culture would be far more important and complex than normal, and this process went a long way in changing the contradanza, molding it into essentially a new form.

The Contradanza, Creolized

The European contradanza was naturally modified as it entered Caribbean life, largely because the majority of music makers were Black or of mixed racial identity. From these African heritages, traditions from both Africa and Cuba were forged together to generate new versions of the musical genres which had been delivered from the European colonizers. This mix was adopted happily by the general public; performances which displayed this blend were celebrated for freshness and originality. Syncopations and measures in counter-time became prominent because of this fusion of African elements and European elements. This fusion of African and

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European elements was called *creolization* — the process by which two (or more) different and distinct cultures or languages are mixed together.\(^{21}\) In the case of the contradanza, two distinct cultural heritages, the African and the European, came together and formed this musical hybrid. For the Caribbean, this did not happen solely instinctively; instead it was done by the power dynamics of the groups involved. As with all things, integration of any kind requires openness on the parts of all parties. The white Europeans had to be open to the dance culture of the Black Caribbean residents, and the people of color had to be willing to align their rhythms and heritage along with the forms brought to them by the Europeans.\(^ {22}\) As this occurred, a new and uniquely Caribbean musical heritage would be forged. People of color were vital in this process, as it would be their innovations which would allow the old forms of Europe to be enlivened and embedded into the Caribbean culture. Indeed, it is no understatement to suggest that without the input of Caribbean people of color, the dance forms from Europe would not have stood much chance of longevity in the Western hemisphere at all.

**Musical Features and Characteristics**

The first-ever published contradanza, “San Pascual Bailón” (1803) shows the basic structure of the dance, which it would retain for the duration of its energetic life and history.

\(^{21}\) For the purposes of this study, the term *creole* can generally be defined as a combination of two entities which form something new. In relation to the contradanza, the fusion of European and African elements creolized the existing dance form. The term also can describe certain regional ethnicities, which arose through mixed-race births.

\(^{22}\) Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 32-3.
The most important feature of the dance was its binary form, consisting of an eight-bar A section, or *primo*, which was repeated. Its B section, or *segunda*, also had eight measures. The entirety of the piece could also be repeated, to allow for dancing to continue. In many cases, the *primo* section of the contradanza appeared as a *paseo*, or introduction. This would function as a promenade, where dancers were essentially invited to the floor to begin lining up for the

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performances. Paseos did not traditionally differ greatly from the primos in terms of intensity or style; the general elegance and class of the dance was retained. The greatest difference came in the general lack of the creolized and syncopated rhythms.24 Within this basic form were simple diatonic melodies in regular four- or eight-bar phrases. The habanero rhythm (or tango rhythm) was present in its bass. The great majority of contradanzas were written in 2/4 time, with a few exceptions resting in 6/8 or even 3/4, likely a vestige of the English country dance, from which it originated. Those were more likely to display hemiola effects, as music of Spain and Latin American would. Through the process of creolization, the Cuban contradanza became more colorful and lively, stitching itself into the fabric of the island and its culture. The input of Afro-Caribbean musicians effectuated this process, more so than any other force. The introduction and subsequent integration of new rhythmic cells — most of which were of West African derivation — allowed for the contradanza to become less European and more Caribbean. These were the rhythmic cells that ultimately embedded into the contradanza and drifted all around the Caribbean in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:25

- the habanera, or tango rhythm
- the tresillo
- the amphibrach (a variant of the habanera)
- the cinquillo (arising toward the end of the 19th century, after Saumell)
- the clave rhythm (not to be confused with the musical instrument of the same name)

24 Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 23. In contradanzas of the Dominican Republic, the paseo would often be march-like, written in straight eighth or sixteenth notes.

25 Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 68-9. The cinquillo, upon its integration into the contradanza culture in the 1870s and after, would pervade the danzón in Havana and Matanzas.
The addition of these rhythms are essential in understanding how the contradanza became a truly Caribbean musical genre, fraying its ties to its European past. Rhythm meant a great deal to the form. Syncopations were vital in the contradanza’s development and spread. Each rhythmic cell augmented and advanced the contradanza (and later, the danza) inside Cuba, and out of it. Of all the four listed above, the habanera became a hallmark of Cuban contradanzas. Both Saumell and Cervantes employed them for bass lines in the left hand. Habanera rhythms could often appear in melodic lines too. It spread all around the Caribbean, bearing strong links to a West African heritage. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the use of this rhythm was associated with the tango in both Cuba and Spain, and ultimately became part of vocal songs as well, which would themselves come to be known as “habaneras.”

26 This rhythm, once applied to the contradanza, was played at a rather swift tempo, and its diffusion into the Cuban musical culture would likely have been shared by all people — both in the upper and lower classes.

27 Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 19-20. The term “habanera” lends itself to its Cuban heritage, as “habanera” can be literally translated as “of Havana.”

The *tresillo*, while sounding similar to “triplet” in translation, could not be more different; it should therefore not be considered a simple triplet in the European musical sense. It entered the dialogue through Afro-Latin origins, and became prominent in both Cuban and Puerto Rican danzas in the nineteenth centuries. The origin of the *amphibrach* can also be attributed to West Africa. Its use is as common as the *habanera* pattern, and became exceptionally useful in melodic material in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Haiti, and even Brazil. The use of the *cinqüillo* is somewhat more nuanced that the other patterns. It also originated in West Africa and features most notably in Afro-Caribbean traditional music, even into certain cultural voodoo ceremonies in Haiti and Martinique. Rising to prominence in the later decades of the nineteenth century, mostly after Saumell, the *cinqüillo* appeared most in danzas written by Cervantes and Lecuona. In Haiti, it was known as the *quintolet*. By the end of the nineteenth century (and the beginning of the twentieth), the *cinqüillo* became the basic rhythm of the danzón in Cuba, as well as danzas in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. It would even extend into the calypso-style music of Trinidad, primarily as a melodic entity.\(^28\) Finally, one of the basic, floor-level elements of Cuban music presents in the *clave*, a three-two rhythmic pattern which often spans two measures which sound as though they are one. The *clave* rhythm has a strong first part and a weaker second part, mirroring the call-and-response structure which has an African heritage. It also has some links to traditional Western music, as usually first beats are traditionally stronger than second beats. This rhythm forms a part of the contradanza.\(^29\)

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\(^{28}\) Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 21-22.

In terms of melodies and harmonies, the contradanza generally adhered to the standard European conventions of the eighteenth century. They were symmetrical in form and classical in nature. It was not generally in the melodic construction that the creolization would be most seen; instead, that would occur largely in the bass, with its rhythmic patterns. The habanera was the most dominant, but all its derivations and variations appeared in contradanzas, giving life to the form and pushing its development forward. Most contradanzas were written as piano scores at the beginning, and even through the works of Ernesto Lecuona, one of the final great danza composers. Some, however, were primarily written as dance music, calling for the inclusion of other instruments in ensemble arrangements.\textsuperscript{30}

Two other important characteristics in the contradanza bear exploration before assessing the input of the composers which would carry them forward. First, the contradanzas of both Saumell and Cervantes would make exceptional use of titles. The titles which were chosen by these two composers (along with their contemporaries) did not bear any specific performative directions, so they could be colorful and speak to certain moods, feelings, events, and emotions. Their imaginativeness offered insights into happenings in Cuban culture, and even into the inner lives of the composers themselves. Secondly, their profusion into the community is important as this form would come to dominate Cuban culture. The publication of newspapers and musical journals allowed for the proliferation of amateur performers and composers. The goal of this was to allow for the contradanza to become more accessible. This also meant the form generally adhered to would become more cemented. To appeal to amateurs and average citizens, the

\textsuperscript{30} Manuel, \textit{Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean}, 70-1.
flowery ornamentations that were in vogue in Europe by composers like Liszt and Chopin would generally be avoided in the contradanza.\textsuperscript{31}

As the contradanza began its rise to prominence in Cuba, it would be aided by series of exceptional composers. Each would use their own unique styles and personal histories to uplift the dance form, and under their influences the island of Cuba would begin to see itself not as a colonial outpost, but as an independent nation. The first great pioneer of the contradanza would not have the most traditional background, but his efforts far surpassed traditional expectations. In fact, his exceptional efforts granted him the title “Father of the Contradanza.” This great pioneer was Manuel Saumell.

\textsuperscript{31} Manuel, \textit{Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean}, 72-3.
Chapter 3: Manuel Saumell Robredo

Though the first contradanza was written at the very start of the nineteenth century, it was the compositional ability of Manuel Saumell (1818-1870) that would elevate this form into its heights. The contributions of Saumell to the contradanza offer great interest in understanding how the Cuban identity was formed. The genre would become the preferred method of musical and political expression for most of the decades of the nineteenth century. Saumell’s work synthesized an emerging musical culture and served as a starting point for a host of dances that would follow in decades to come.\(^1\) From his astonishing rhythmic and melodic inventiveness came the danza, habanera, and danzón of later centuries. The Cuban spirit was captured by Saumell’s elegant harmonies. He established and refined a new Cuban culture, galvanizing popular musical effects into a new national identity.\(^2\) Saumell’s contradanzas transcended averageness and mediocrity and were most comparable to the short European character pieces. Filled with elegance and sophistication, the contradanzas of Saumell created a template for scores of composers in future years.\(^3\)


Saumell, the Man

Manuel Saumell Robredo was born on 19 April 1818 in Havana, where at this time there was already a formidable contradanza culture growing. Saumell loved music even at an early age, but had the misfortune of being born into a lower-class family. He was, therefore, forced to educate himself at the start of his musical journey. Being born into a poor family, he had few expectations for any degree of success or greatness. Growing up, he was a fair enough pianist, and travelled just about anywhere seeking opportunities to play. He performed Beethoven trios, filled in for cellists (an instrument he also played), and completed orchestrations and arrangements. Saumell was a hard worker, and held himself to high standards. He was also known to be sensitive and generous with others in terms of his time. As with other composers, he struggled to find time to compose. Most notably, and despite his modest upbringing, he aspired to become great, teeming with inspiration for novel projects and new musical ideas. He did have a chance to undertake some formal musical study by taking piano lessons with Juan Federico Edelmann in 1836. Edelmann was a French national who settled in Cuba in 1832. With Edelmann and another teacher, Mauricio Pike, Saumell learned topics ranging from arrangement and harmony to counterpoint and fugue. He even played the organ for several churches in Havana. He was diligent and greatly appreciated music, despite the struggles and hardships he would experience.


6 Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes and Forty Danzas in the Context of Nineteenth-Century Cuban Nationalism” (University of Calgary, AB 2016), 45. Edelmann would popularize the combination of European art music with the local Cuban style.

7 Orovio, Cuba from A to Z, 199.
Around 1839, Saumell became enamored with singer Dolores de Saint-Maxent. She introduced Schubert vocal works into the Cuban musical culture. Unfortunately for Saumell, his impoverished and itinerant composer life could never suffice for the family of de Saint-Maxent, as they were extremely wealthy. There is some evidence that the two did however have a romantic relationship, but the social class snub affected Saumell in a powerful way: he resolved to elevate both his art and himself to appeal to the wealthier members of Cuban society.\textsuperscript{8} Saumell was always ambitious, and these slights of class would certainly push him even further in his musical trajectory. Saumell died on 14 August 1870.

Saumell’s life holds great meaning for the history and understanding of Cuban music and nationalism. His contradanzas prompted the generation of a Cuban identity, demonstrating “Cuban-ness” — the infusion of popular local elements into traditional forms.\textsuperscript{9} For Saumell, the contradanza became his most prominent and longest-lasting contribution to the Cuban culture and musical society. While Saumell may not have invented the genre, it was he who took it to an unparalleled level of quality. Saumell lifted the contradanza to heights unseen and embedded it into the Cuban culture. Indeed, he was among the first contradanza composers who actually elevated the genre. By crafting over fifty contradanzas for the piano, Saumell allowed the form to transcend the ballroom and enter concert halls and salons.\textsuperscript{10} For all the somewhat mediocre composers at the time, Saumell rose above them all, even in spite of his impoverished family life. Undoubtedly his greatest achievement was the development of a Cuban national and musical identity.

\textsuperscript{8} Carpentier, \textit{Music in Cuba}, 187.
\textsuperscript{9} Carpentier, \textit{Music in Cuba}, 192-3.
\textsuperscript{10} Carpentier, \textit{Music in Cuba}, 120-1.
Saumell, the Cuban Nationalist

In 1839, Saumell began to develop ideas for the first ever Cuban opera, centered purely on Cuban themes. Nationalism was already beginning to seep into music and composition; Russian composer Mikhail Glinka had premiered *A Life for the Czar* in 1836, using music for nationalist purposes. Saumell drew from this example and began to envision the first ever Cuban nationalist opera. In order to present a truly authentic Cuban experience, Saumell drew from the happenings of his island during the early nineteenth century. He chose to set the opera in 1590, and told a story of unrequited love. Set in a sugar mill, the opera’s action would highlight issues arising from class conflict and racial discrimination, an accurate depiction of the socio-political state of the island at the time. Everything was to be totally Cuban: the story, setting, and especially the music. This vision was a true representation of Cuban life and history, using Cuba’s own musical ideas and traditions. It also stood in keeping with the nationalist movements brewing in Europe during the nineteenth century. Cuba’s history and culture were driving factors in the composition of this opera, most certainly, but as all composers did, Saumell found ways to interweave his own personal story into it. The plot of unrequited love was almost certainly linked to his love of Dolores de Saint-Maxent — a love which ultimately went unreturned — and his desire to break into the upper echelons of Cuban culture.

Upon what was this opera to be based? In February 1839 Cuban author José Antonio Echevarría (1815-1885) wrote a novel titled *Antonelli* — a work which Saumell read many times over. The story itself was written well enough, and from this story Saumell could derive a libretto.

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11 Orovio, *Cuba from A to Z*, 199. Saumell viewed *A Life for the Czar* as an example for how music could be set in a nationalistic way. With this example being extant in the musical canon, Saumell could now conceive an opera in an exclusively Cuban setting.

for his opera. Its frame came together with this, and Saumell’s ideas received initial support from Cuban literary critic Domingo del Monte (1804-53), who praised both Saumell and the idea for the nationalist opera. Citing Saumell’s “brilliant disposition for music,” del Monte sought help from colleague J. L. Alfonso, requesting Alfonso or a friend write the opera, calling it “a great service to homeland and art.” Once again, however, Saumell ultimately found rejection from these high profile elites. Alfonso dismissed the idea in its entirety, deriding it as absurd and ridiculous, and so the idea was dispatched. Next, del Monte turned against the idea as well, hastening the death of the opera. The termination of Saumell’s relationship with Dolores Saint-Maxent permanently halted any work on the opera, and all the ambitions Saumell bore for its development and composition. These failures may have killed the Cuban opera but they did not halt Saumell’s nationalist drive. In his contradanzas the spirit of Cuba shone brightest. He utilized the folkloric elements of Cuba into this growing nationalist movement. His contradanzas held all the elements of meter and rhythm inherent in burgeoning Cuban musical culture of the nineteenth century.

Saumell, the Contradanza Pioneer

When Saumell began writing his fifty contradanzas, the genre itself was becoming an amalgamation of influences from West Africa, France, and Spain. Saumell’s approach legitimized and standardized the genre, incorporating popular styles in a sensible and refined way. His fusion made this musical experience appealing not only for dance, but also for formal,

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concert settings. In a win for Saumell, his contradanzas ultimately transcended all class divisions, fulfilling one of his long-held goals.\textsuperscript{15}

All the contradanzas written by Saumell fit into the common practice of his day. Each had two parts, comprising about eight measures each. The sections could be repeated if necessary, even if the repeats were not so marked, allowing for dancers to complete the requisite series of motions prescribed by that specific dance. Indeed, Saumell often indicated \textit{da capo} at the end of some of these dances, but rarely mark \textit{fine} to indicate sections could be repeated indefinitely until the dance was complete.\textsuperscript{16} The contradanza is generally considered a “small” musical genre, and under Saumell’s pen they avoided unnecessary virtuosity or ultra-novel harmonic innovation. Irrespective of this conservatism, Saumell’s contradanzas were masterpieces of invention. Their melodies and textures were varied and creative, deploying careful and sensible balances between creole rhythmic syncopations and pianistic poise. Two broad categories of Saumell contradanzas would emerge: those bearing stately, simple elegance, and those which bear greater uses of rubato and variances. In the former category, both the melodies and accompaniments are straightforward (ex. “La Suavecita”); in those with greater variance, ebullience and joy are prominent (ex. “Recuerdos tristes”).\textsuperscript{17}

In his compositional temperament, Saumell was not overtly virtuosic. He chose not to write using the flowery, flashy style of the European composers of the time, elevating more of a Schubertian melodic tone. This decision was not borne of dislike for the European tradition; it instead grew out of Cuban musical tradition. The classical tradition in his contradanzas was

\textsuperscript{15} Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes,” 47.

\textsuperscript{16} Fernández, “La Contradanza Cubana,” 121.

\textsuperscript{17} Manuel, \textit{Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean}, 80.
strong and present, and could be seen in nearly all the contradanzas. The contradanza “Los Chismes de Guanabacoa” (“Gossip from Guanabacoa”) is essentially a minuet (in a livelier tempo), befitting the Cuban spirit. “La Dengosa” contains a canon, and the melody of “La Suavecita” is smooth and silky, bearing a Mozartian hue.\(^{18}\) In these contradanzas, form is beautifully displayed. On each page, as short as they may be, there is a wide emotional range, from high drama and agitated nervousness to tender sweetness and gentle beauty. Saumell’s contradanzas were written in two parts, a *primo* (A section) and a *segundo* (B section). The *primo* sections were usually introductory *paseos*, with some bearing classical flourishes, like a concerto, as in “La Territorial.” In some cases, the *primo* sections could be more gentle and sweet, like “La Luisiana,” a contradanza dedicated to Louis Gottschalk. The *segundo* B sections were always very Cuban, in melody, folklorish flavor, and especially rhythms.\(^{19}\)

![Figure 3.2. “La Luisiana,” *paseo*.](image)

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\(^{19}\) Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, 191.
The character of the contradanza can also be separated into these two sections. In the *primo*, the character is generally calmer, serving as an introduction to the dance. Couples could use this opening to line up in formation as the dance would start up. In the *segundo*, the character shifts to become more lively and rhythmic. The difference did not come in tempo; instead, it was solely based on the increase in accented and syncopated rhythms. In short, the *segundo* B sections of the contradanza were more creole. “El Disimulo” (“Concealment”) demonstrates this pattern clearly.²⁰

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Figure 3.4. “El Disimulo.”
In tonality, Saumell was not greatly adventurous either. Harmonies remained fairly traditional, keeping in line with the music salons in vogue during his time. There was neither unorthodox harmonic exploration nor venturing into wild keys unrelated to the tonic. At times, however, there could be a modulation to a different key in the segundo sections, with no shift back to the original key, as can be seen in “El Disimulo” and other contradanzas, like “La Matilde” and “La Tedezco.”

In accordance with the traditions of the day, Saumell titled his contradanzas with great intention and purpose; none was randomly named. They usually exhibit an interest of some sort, marking socioeconomic or cultural expression of the people. Some celebrated the opening of a business of some sort: “La Territorial” was dedicated to the opening of the Territorial Company, specializing in the sugar industry; “La Fénix” was dedicated to a store selling jewelry and art. Others commemorated news of interest, as “El Huricán” (“The Hurricane”) and “El Cataclismo” (“The Cataclysm”) did. Dance was not forsaken in Saumell’s writings; “La Piñata Habanera” and “Saludo de Cuba” were written for this purpose. “Los Chismes de Guanabacoa” and “Sopla que quema” were titled to represent talk of the town. More than these socially-conscious titles were those written for specific dedicatees. These could have symbolized actual friendships or overtures to friendship. The French-titled “L’Amitie” (“Friendship”) was dedicated to Henri Herz; “La Luisiana” to Louis Moreau Gottschalk, who knew Saumell. Many were devoted to young women and other men who received them as gifts, such as “La Dengosa,” “La Josefina,” “La Celestina,” and “La Maria.” One contradanza, “¡Toma, Tomás!” was dedicated to Tomás Ruiz, to whom Saumell is said to have given it to saying that precise phrase (“take it, Tomás!”).

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These titles were not just about dedications or commentary, however. They bore effects on the music as well. Titles could serve as starting points for musical phrasing, shaping, and melody. For example, in “Ayes del Alma” (“Pain of the Soul”), phrases rise and fall anxiously, replicating the fluttering of a broken heart. In “Niña Bonita” (“Pretty Girl”), there is gentleness and lyricism in the melody, matching the title closely.22

What marked the significance of the contradanza was its rhythm. The infusion of African musical elements into Cuba prompted the creolizing of music. Rhythmic interpretation was of paramount importance to Saumell, and he translated this carefully into each of his contradanzas. He sensibly employed a variety of patterns in his works, which would define not only the contradanza, but a host of dances which would come in the future. Of course, the most important pattern, the habanera, settled into nearly every one of the contradanza. Another, the cinquillo, would be imported from Black Haitian migrants to Cuba.

![Figure 3.5. The cinquillo rhythm.](image)

This pattern would see its rise to prominence after Saumell — more specifically in the danzón. While it took time to drift to Havana from the eastern provinces, where a majority of the Haitian migrants would live, Saumell would use it in two contradanzas: “La linda” (“The Pretty One”)

and “El Somatén.” Their inclusion is transient and brief, which shows this pattern was not yet fully integrated into contradanza compositions. Later composers made greater use of it. In addition to these two places, a variant of the *cinquillo* is also present in “Sopla que quema.” (“Blows that burn”).

Figure 3.7. The *cinquillo* in “La linda,” m. 16.

Figure 3.8. The *cinquillo* variant, as seen in “Sopla que quema.”
More complex rhythms present in “Tu sonrisa” (“Your Smile”). Quarter-note triplets present in the bass alongside 16th notes in the melody. Given the tradition of Saumell’s time, the pattern was played in a similar way to the tresillo, with the first two quarters in the triplet being slightly elongated than the last.\(^\text{23}\)

Saumell was especially precise in the employment of rhythm and its notation. As can be seen in “Tu sonrisa,” the bass was not to be rendered as a normal triplet, nor were the syncopations to be obscured under excessive rubato. The left hand passages in waltz meter were to be neatly combined with the right hand melody in duple meter. Tensions between this binary and ternary were not unique to only Saumell. Future contradanza writers, in Cuba and Puerto Rico, and even Haiti, would take this degree of care in their rhythmic writings.\(^\text{24}\) This high


\(^{24}\) Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 80.
specificity, coupled with high creativity, would mark Saumell and his contradanzas. Each page bears its own measure of individuality.²⁵

Saumell also experimented with time and meter. All his contradanzas were written in either 2/4 or 6/8. As different as these time signatures seem on paper (and in traditional European music), they both have two strong pulses which could easily be manipulated in the Cuban musical creolization process. Indeed, the traditional tango rhythm, which fits neatly in 2/4, also has a complement in 6/8, and Saumell exploited this fact liberally. The majority of his contradanzas were in 2/4; those which used 6/8 require the ambiguity of hemiola, disguising where the true pulse was.²⁶

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Saumell’s Legacy

While Cuba was not a free state at the time of Saumell’s life, the seeds of the new nation were planted and growing, as local creolized music gained a presence on the island. In this context, Saumell conceived a distinctly Cuban musical art form, and he may have been among the first to do this. Even though he was not able to realize his dream project of writing the first ever Cuban opera, he offered far more to the blossoming creolized contradanza, which served as the precursor to a host of other dance forms. He also laid the groundwork for future composers, including Ignacio Cervantes. Saumell stood atop an extensive musical legacy, extending through nationalist composers inside Cuba and even outside the country. His impacts reached many Caribbean nations, and even the United States. Indeed, the works of many high profile American composers, including Scott Joplin and Jelly Roll Morton, could trace their rhythmic patterns to the Cuban impressions of Saumell.

In Cuba, Saumell’s rhythmic invention presaged a host of future forms, which evolved in their names and terms, but not in their basic outline. Future dances fell under Saumell’s influence, making him not only the father of the contradanza but arguably the founder of other dances as well. Evidence of these future forms is scattered all around the contradanzas: “L’Amitie” (“Friendship”) features links to the habanera; “La Matilde” presages the guajira; “La Celestina” (“Matchmaker”) elevates the clave; and “La Nené” (“The Baby”) grew into the

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27 Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes,” 49. The Ten Years’ War, which ended after Saumell’s death, would negatively impact artistic expression and activity (as wars tend to do), but it would serve as a catalyst for the nationalist movement which would consume Cuba for the remainder of the 19th century.

criolla.\textsuperscript{29} His high specificity in meter also bore importance to future forms. Dances in 2/4 blossomed into the habanera and the danzón. In fact, the sectional nature of the danzón was a near-direct byproduct of the contradanza.\textsuperscript{30} Saumell’s contradanza “La Tedezco” did this explicitly: its \textit{primo} section alternates a four-bar eighth-note theme with a four-bar response in 16th notes. This would become a signature of the danzón.\textsuperscript{31} This can also be seen in “El Jigote de Trinita,” which marks a feast of the Trinity, and the tango rhythm in the bass of “L’Amitie.”

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig312}
\caption{“L’Amitie,” showing the tango bass rhythm.}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig313}
\caption{“El jigote de Trinita,” precursor to the danzón.}
\end{figure}

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Section} & \textbf{Rhythm} \\
\hline
Primo & 4\-bar eighths, 4\-bar sixteens \\
Secundo & 4\-bar eighths, 4\-bar sixteens \\
Terceto & 4\-bar eighths, 4\-bar sixteens \\

\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{29} Carpentier, \textit{Music in Cuba}, 191-2.

\textsuperscript{30} Fernández, “La Contradanza Cubana,” 129.

\textsuperscript{31} Manuel, \textit{Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean}, 80.
Figure 3.14. “La Tedezco,” precursor to the danzón.
Those contradanzas written in 6/8 would give life to peasant genres like the guajira, the clave, and the criolla; “La Maria” and the segundo section of “La Suavecita” (“Smooth”) represent this clearly. Even the Cuban canción would find some of its roots in Saumell’s contradanzas. In “Recuerdos tristes” (“Sad Memories”), the markers and character of the canción are readily apparent: poignant lyricism, square phrasing, and melody notated in thirds and sixths. In totality, Saumell truly did serve as the model upon which Cuban music would be based for the rest of the nineteenth century and even into the twentieth. His embrace of national identity and creolized rhythms granted him the fame and recognition he long sought as a young musician.

Figure 3.15. “La Maria,” a template for future dances like the guajira.

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32 Fernández, “La Contradanza Cubana,” 129-31. The guajira describes a dance which combines pulses between 6/8 and 3/4; the criolla describes a dance with such creolized rhythms as present in the contradanza. The criolla is also set in 6/8. (Orovio, Cuba from A to Z, 60-1, 101).
Figure 3.16. “La Suavecita,” segundo section, which shows future dances like the guajira and the clave.

Figure 3.17. “Recuerdos tristes,” segundo section, showing the thirds and sixths that would form the basis of the Cuban canción.
An American Connection: Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-69)

Because of Manuel Saumell, the rhythms of Cuban music would begin to diffuse throughout the region. One of its primary assets presented in a composer from the United States, and one not too far from the island of Cuba: Louis Moreau Gottschalk. Many of Gottschalk’s Cuban-inspired works came to bear great importance on the growing Latin musical influence in the United States. The close geographic proximity between New Orleans, Louisiana, and Havana would bear out this importance; the mix of Spanish, French, and African elements would infuse the works of Gottschalk, and many subsequent Black American composers.\(^{33}\) Gottschalk was born in New Orleans on 8 May 1829, allowing him to have great familiarity with the Caribbean culture of Havana. Indeed, his mother was a white refugee from the Haitian Revolution.

Beginning in 1842, Gottschalk would study in Paris, befriending composers like Chopin, Berlioz, and Liszt. He would return to the U.S. in 1853, and set off for Havana for the first time the following year. While in Cuba, he met and befriended Saumell himself, along with Nicolas Espadero and other Cuban musicians.\(^{34}\) Shortly after his arrival in Cuba, he drafted his first work bearing a strong Cuban influence, “El Cocoye,” performed in Havana on 13 March 1854. He went on to perform all across the island. He went home to the U.S. in 1855, but would return to Cuba twice more, in 1857 and 1860.\(^{35}\) Upon his 1860 return, Gottschalk delivered a major concert in Havana, with audiences praising his incorporation of Cuban themes and local music


\(^{34}\) Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 82-3. Espadero’s influence would extend to Ignacio Cervantes, whom he would teach in later years.

into his own works. In that concert, Gottschalk unveiled a large scale orchestral work at the Teatro Tacón entitled *La Nuit des Tropiques*. The performance required a massive orchestra, and musicians were brought in from Santiago de Cuba to fill the ranks. Gottschalk returned to the U.S. in 1862, where he would give nearly 100 additional concerts, though none on the scale of his Havana undertakings. He even performed for U.S. President Abraham Lincoln during the years of the American Civil War. Gottschalk died on 18 December 1869.

The greatest asset that Gottschalk granted Latin American music was mainly the fact that he was an American. He was among the first composers to recognize the great potential inherent in music from the Caribbean. He adopted these Afro-Caribbean rhythms into a series of his own works, even drafting Cuban-style contradanzas of his own. Gottschalk offered a foreign legitimization to the Cuban musical canon, even though the fiercely independent and free spirited nationalists on the island needed no such approval. His friendship with Saumell was so firm and thorough that two of the Saumell contradanzas would be dedicated to the American, “La Luisiana” and “Recuerdos de Gottschalk.” Gottschalk also influenced future danza composers, particularly Ignacio Cervantes and Ernesto Lecuona.

Many of Gottschalk’s Cuban-inspired works teem with musical charm and ease, and many of the melodies bear the strong Cuban feeling. He made good use of the habanera rhythms, in particular at the climaxes of the works. One such work, titled “Ojos criollos,” bore these

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36 Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 83.

37 Sublette, *Cuba and its Music*, 151-2. This concert marked the first time such a massive undertaking would occur in Cuba, with another large concert occurring in 1861.


39 Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 83. By naming one of the contradanza’s “La Luisiana,” Saumell cleverly remarked on both Gottschalk’s name and his state of origin.
features out, and its habanera rhythm became the basis for later American composers in ragtime and the cakewalk.\textsuperscript{40} “Ojos criollos” shows both the habanera rhythm in its bass line as well as the amphibrach in the right hand melody. Its offbeat passages served as a precursor to jazz music in the 1920s as well.\textsuperscript{41}

![Figure 3.18. Gottschalk, “Ojos criollos.” The habanera rhythm is present in the bass, alongside the amphibrach in the melody.](image)

Generally speaking, the Gottschalk contradanzas which survive adhere to the Saumell model: two sections, with the first being less syncopated than the second. Some, though, would break the pattern. In his “Réponds-moi!” there are far more virtuosic figurations than Saumell ever used. This, and a few others, were not as danceable as the standard contradanzas of the time

\textsuperscript{40} Roberts, \textit{The Latin Tinge}, 29-30.

\textsuperscript{41} Sublette, \textit{Cuba and its Music}, 150-1.
were. Gottschalk also utilized the *cinqillo* rhythm, a feature that Saumell did not use nearly as much in the entirety of his contradanzas. Gottschalk deviated slightly with form as well, varying which sections would be repeated and how many times they would be repeated. Some sections were expanded beyond the short lengths Saumell adhered to, and would often include much more liberal musical flourishes and pianistic flair. This was likely the sharpest departure from Saumell, who consistently opposed the use of over-dramatized floweriness. This departure earned Gottschalk negative strikes from critics in later years. Cuban musical chronicler Alejo Carpentier lamented that the embellishments added by Gottschalk to the contradanza diminished them with “bad taste.” Others noted that, despite Saumell’s and Cervantes’s admiration for Gottschalk, their danzas held greater poise and charm that Gottschalk, due to their lack of such ornamentation. This criticism, though perhaps somewhat harsh, does make sense. The length of Saumell’s contradanzas contributed to their charm and elegance. The addition of virtuosic ornamentation and flowery sparkles could distract listeners from the lyricism and depth of the contradanza in its original setting. The final page of Gottschalk’s “Résponds-moi!” shows this virtuosity, with a glittering right hand melody accompanied by the amphibrach in the left hand. Repeated notes and the high register are a marked departure from the format Saumell established as standard for the contradanza, but this was the impact Gottschalk left on the form. The final page of this piece is shown below.

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42 Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 83-4.
Manuel Saumell was more than just the pioneer of the Cuban contradanza. His forward-thinking outlook laid the grounds for more styles and genres of music than he could ever have dreamed. For all the hardships and setbacks he endured, Saumell impacted scores of composers and changed the history of his island. He more than made up for the ambitions of his youth. His failure at creating the first Cuban opera instead allowed him to perfect a form that would become deeply interwoven in Cuba, and all around the Caribbean. Yet, as much as he did for the contradanza, his successors would do more, and the evidence came under the pen of another Cuban nationalist: Ignacio Cervantes Kawanagh.

Figure 3.19. Gottschalk, “Réponds-moi!”
Chapter 4: Ignacio Cervantes Kawanagh

Ignacio Cervantes Kawanagh (1847-1905) succeeded Saumell in the composition of the danza, using the template Saumell created to expand the form. Though he dismissed them at the time of their compositions, his danzas displayed his most nationalistic tendencies. Cervantes carefully crafted his danzas, turning it into a magnificent form in Cuban society, fitting not only for dance but for formal concerts. They paralleled the “Norwegian Dances” of Grieg and the “Slavic Dances” of Dvořák in their embrace of nationalism.\(^1\) Through these danzas, Cervantes became the most important Cuban composer of the late nineteenth century, infusing his works with elegant style, good taste, distinctive ideas, and creative richness.\(^2\) Cervantes drew from the example of Manuel Saumell in the entirety of his danza canon, building on Saumell’s legacy. Cervantes giving the danza the breadth and depth Saumell’s lack of training could not allow.

Figure 4.1. Ignacio Cervantes, as a teen (right); in middle age (center); in his Havana studio (left).

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Cervantes’s Life and Training

Ignacio Cervantes was born on 31 July 1847 into an upper-class family. He found little obstruction in giving himself over to artistic study and exploration. His father, Don Pedro Cervantes, had a distinguished career as a lawyer in Camagüey, later serving as mayor of San Antonio de los Baños in Artemisa Province and Secretary of the University of Havana. His mother, Maria Soledad Kawanagh, was the daughter of a German baron and a Cuban woman. Cervantes began his musical training with his father, and later with Nicholas Espadero in 1859. Under Espadero’s tutelage, Cervantes learned piano skills from traditional, well-known European composers of both the Classical and Romantic eras, including Clementi, Dussek, and Alkan. Later in his studies Cervantes integrated the music of Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt into his studies, allowing him to be well versed in a great variety of musical styles and techniques.3

In 1865, at the age of eighteen, Cervantes went to Paris to enter its conservatory. There, he distinguished himself as a highly talented performer, winning a series of prizes in piano (1866) and harmony and composition (1868). He attempted to secure the prestigious Prix de Rome but was disallowed due to being a foreigner. In spite of this, he found himself on the radar of many of the great (and familiar) European Romantic masters: Rossini granted Cervantes a place in his own inner circle, and Franz Liszt regarded him highly as a pianist. This European training refined Cervantes as a pianist, and he routinely featured works from Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Liszt into his programs, garnering praise from his former teacher, Espadero.4 Cervantes gave up a potentially successful touring career to return to Cuba in 1870,

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3 Shari A. Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes and Forty Danzas in the Context of Nineteenth-Century Cuban Nationalism” (University of Calgary, AB, 2016), 50-1. “Don” before a name, as in Cervantes’s father, means “Mr.” or “Señor,” and not an additional name, like “Donald” in English.

4 Carpentier, Music in Cuba, 204-5.
demonstrating his love for his country. Upon his return, he taught lessons and played in churches alongside hosting solo recitals. In 1872 Cervantes married María Amparo Sánchez Richeaux, and together they had eleven children, ten boys and one girl. Only four of them survived to adulthood, and his only daughter, Maria, would become a well known pianist and vocalist.

Two years after Cervantes’s return to Cuba, the Ten Years’ War began. Many composers during this time wilted under pressure from Spanish imperialists to adjust their writing style, but Cervantes refused. He and fellow musician, violinist Jose White, held concerts to raise money for the separatist movement. For this, they were marked by the Spanish, and in 1875 Cervantes was warned by Cuba’s Captain General (a secret supporter) to evacuate the island before potential detainment. The Captain General asked Cervantes where he wished to go, and he chose the United States, for there he could be as close to Cuba as he could be. He also vowed to continue aiding the separatists. His spent this exile in New York from 1875-79. While abroad, Cervantes continued holding fundraising concerts for Cuba’s freedom fighters. His return to his homeland was precipitated by his father’s death in 1879. Being an only child, he no doubt felt great obligation to return for his father, who had always been one of his most ardent supporters.

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5 Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes,” 51.

6 Sublette, Cuba and its Music, 154. Maria Cervantes would study with her father and become a singer of Cuban folk music, a pianist, and a composer. She would tour the United States in the 1930s, making records and giving performances (Orovio, Cuba from A to Z, 50).

7 Carpentier, Music in Cuba, 206.
Once back in Cuba, he found a strong musical culture had grown out of the Ten Years’ War, so Cervantes then resumed his concertizing, raising greater funds for the nationalist cause. He subsequently earned and retain a high status as a nationalist composer, with a special tribute performance given in his honor in 1887; Cervantes himself performed his *Serenata Cubana*. Some of his other works were also played, including his *Symphony in C minor* and *Scherzo capriccioso*. In the early 1890s, Cervantes conducted several international tours of Mexico and the United States. He returned to Cuba once more in 1894, where his health began to decline. As the Republic of Cuba was inaugurated in 1902 following the Cuban War of Independence, Cervantes was at an exposition in Charleston, South Carolina. His illness brought him back home in June of 1902, and there he delivered his final concert. He traveled back to New York with his son seeking treatment, but to no avail. Cervantes died at home in Havana on 29 April 1905. His death was caused by the softening of the encephalic tissue of the brain, combined with a perforation in the skull.

**Cervantes and Cuban Nationalism**

When Cervantes concluded his studies at the Paris Conservatory, he had an opportunity to remain in Europe touring. He likely could have achieved great fame on this path, given his connections to European masters and his high talent. However, he chose to return home. He

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8 Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes,” 53-55. Cervantes would leave behind one unfinished danza upon his death in 1905, which his daughter Maria would complete, giving it the title “Fusion de Almas” (“Soul Fusion”).

9 Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, 207. Cervantes’s doctors suggested his nervous condition could have been precipitated by his unusual habit of writing music during the early hours of the morning in near total darkness.
shirked international acclaim in exchange for his beloved Cuba. This display of national pride marked his music and compositions.

Cervantes would become one of the first musicians in the Americas who would view nationalism as a consequence of a person’s character, not something taught or learned. Despite his formal French training, Cervantes was instinctive in the compositional techniques and language of his homeland. His danzas — and really all his works — were the most authentic expression of Cuban heritage and culture as any that had been written to that point. He thoroughly embraced the cadences of Cuba, refusing to deviate from the traditions which he learned growing up. In this way, he followed in the path blazed by Manuel Saumell. He did adopt a few techniques he gathered from Europe, the most notable being the mazurka style of Chopin. Cervantes would, as Chopin did, use a smaller form to express national pride. Unlike Chopin, however, Cervantes did not use bravura passages, flashy arpeggiation, prestissimo scales, and unending ornamentation. He instead deployed clear, precise lines, with breathable spaces between notes. Once again, he tracked close to Saumell in this way, as both composers turned from overtly showy virtuosity in their compositions. This choice was in no way meant to harshly deride the virtuosity of European pianists and composers; instead, it was meant to bring music closer to the ideals of the Cuban people, whose heritage was different from their European counterparts.

Cervantes’s nationalism was also derived from his parents and family upbringing. Both of them held a strong Spanish heritage, which would influence Cervantes as a composer. This

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10 Helio Orovio, *Cuba from A to Z* (Tumi Music Ltd., 2004), 49.

background provided him opportunities to advance as a pianist, and through this Cuban nationalism would be lifted up to great heights. There was a catch, however. Ignacio was born in Cuba, and thus was not considered one of the Spaniard elites, granting those elites the “right” to snub him. These social slights led Cervantes to love his island even more, and explained his unending support of Cuban liberation. At this time, between the social elites, those with strong Spanish heritage, enslaved and freed people, not all the island’s inhabitants considered themselves “Cuban.” Through his music, Cervantes sought to break through racial and social class divisions to shape stronger national identity and pride.\textsuperscript{12}

In addition to his danzas, Cervantes would compose other types of works, all of which would adhere to his Cuban identity. Traditionally, larger forms were the main vehicles for nationalist compositions, explaining why Cervantes would not have conceived his danzas as his best nationalistic works, yet they became so, serving as his greatest nationalist legacy.\textsuperscript{13} Cervantes also wrote overtures, waltzes, and two zarzuelas. While they remain largely forgotten, each of them demonstrated Cuban identity. Cervantes’s Parisian training helped him craft music

\textsuperscript{12} Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes,” 55-6.

\textsuperscript{13} Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes,” 56.
with great finesse and neatness, but he never allowed any elitism or poshness to infect his compositions. He always stayed true to his Cuban heritage.\textsuperscript{14} Along with these lesser-known works, Cervantes also attempted to write a Cuban opera, as did Saumell. Two acts of this work, titled \textit{Maledetto}, were completed, but his libretto was quite weak, likely causing its demise.\textsuperscript{15}

Of all the works drafted by Cervantes, his set of danzas marked him as a Cuban musical hero. Each of them bears character, charm, and beauty, and together they grant Cervantes a permanent legacy.

\textbf{The History of the 40 Danzas}

The majority of the 40 Danzas were written in the 1870s-90s, with some being composed even during Cervantes’s New York exile. Indeed, this time away from the island may have engendered even stronger feelings of patriotism, spurring further compositions.\textsuperscript{16} These danzas are a continuation of the model set down by Manuel Saumell, written as salon-style works. In contrast to Saumell, however, Cervantes had more specialized training, having studied abroad and traveled in elite musical circles. This allowed him to generate danzas of greater complexity and depth than Saumell, and even other contemporaries. These danzas required greater technique for the performers. His melodies were more lyrical, polished, and nuanced.\textsuperscript{17} While being restrained in overall form, these danzas display contrapuntal ideas, rich melodies, good pianism, etc.

\textsuperscript{14} Peter Manuel, \textit{Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean} (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 84-5.

\textsuperscript{15} Sublette, \textit{Cuba and its Music}, 154. The collapse of Cervantes’s Cuban opera mirrors the experience of Saumell, whose attempt to create the first Cuban-centered opera also failed.

\textsuperscript{16} Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes,” 58. In this way, there is yet another connection to Chopin, whose exile to France from his native Poland would produce his nationalist mazurkas.

\textsuperscript{17} Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes,” 70.
and perfect voice leading. All but one are in 2/4, and many make use of the cinquillo rhythm, a pattern not employed by Saumell in the earlier contradanzas. The majority of the Cervantes dansas are in major keys, another slight departure from the prevailing trends of the time.\footnote{Glenn Jenks, “Ignacio Cervantes: Piano Dancer,” \emph{Dr. Estrella's Incredibly Abridged Dictionary of Composers}, http://www.stevenestrella.com/composers/cervantesessay.html. 2-4.}

In terms of style, Cervantes’s works followed the tradition of miniature character pieces of Europe during these decades; each was meant to evoke a specific mood. Cervantes’s European training informed his style but did not detract from his Cuban roots. Several of the dansas reflect the growing Cuban identity, and some were popularized by publication in local newspapers, granting amateur performers a chance to try them out. Increasing publicity allowed for the danza style to increase in recognition and embed into the culture of the up-and-coming nation.\footnote{Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes,” 71.} Each danza bears a wide range of emotions and feelings, from lyrical to festive. Their form held closely to the template of Saumell — two sections of about sixteen bars each. The second section would traditionally bear more syncopation than the first. While some require more technical prowess at the keyboard, Cervantes also forsook Romantic floweriness and showmanship, instead choosing a reserved dignity.\footnote{Manuel, \emph{Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean}, 85.} All told, Cervantes took the contradanza and elevated it by making adjustments to its character and mood, while keeping the framework intact. The rhythms of the contradanza were preserved while melodic possibilities were extended. Nationalism and freedom were infused into each page. A Cuban identity was developed: one that was inborn, not derived from training or external factors. No danza written by Cervantes was inauthentic; each
bears charm, good taste, and variances in character. They were, as was the composer, uniquely Cuban.²¹

Exemplar Danzas

Cervantes’s first danza, “Soledad,” was written in 1857 when he was ten years old, and was dedicated to his mother. As young as he was at the time of its composition, this work shows great maturity and an understanding of the form. Present in the melodic material are two key rhythmic features: the tresillo and cinquillo, which defined Cuban music at the time. The bass presents the traditional habanera rhythm.

“No me toques” (“Don’t touch me”) was composed just before the composer was forced to flee to New York. In it, as with “Soledad,” lies a simplistic nature, while bearing a key change in its B section, shifting from the home key of F major to the subdominant Bb major. Saumell also used this technique in several of his contradanzas.²²

Two of the most poignant and emotional danzas of all the Cervantes compositions would be “Adios a Cuba” (“Farewell, Cuba”) and “Vuelta al hogar” (“Back Home”). Composed during the New York exile, “Adios” is filled with the darkness and nostalgia that anyone would expect for a composer far away.

Figure 4.6. “Adios a Cuba.”

²² Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes,” 59-60.
from his family and homeland. Written in 1876, “Adios” uses heavy chromaticism, pedal points, and greater rhythmic complexity than many of the other danzas. These features are complemented by the tresillo and the habanera rhythm. Its sadness demands a slower tempo for the performer, which also shows that not all these danzas were necessarily meant for dancing; “Adios” is a work meant for the concert hall or home salon. This piece is written in A-flat minor, an exceptionally dark key, with no modulations at any point to the relative major. Instead, it is a continually joyless, painful lament, appropriate for a composer pining for home.23

“Vuelta al hogar” serves essentially as the “part 2” to “Adios.” As with all works of music, interpretations will vary between different performers, but this piece must be considered based on its context. This piece, like “Adios,” starts and ends in A-flat minor, but it features a brief segue into the relative major in the B section. Both these factors contribute into a potential interpretation of this piece. Cervantes’s return to Cuba was prompted by the illness and subsequent death of his father. The foray into a major mode could reflect the gladness Cervantes felt upon returning to his homeland, but by re-establishing A-flat minor as the home key, it is clear that the circumstances of his return were not as bright and cheerful as he likely would have hoped them to be. Being an only child, Cervantes would have been in intense pain seeing his ill father pass away. Thus, his return to the island was bittersweet, and this danza is too.

Figure 4.7. “Vuelta al hogar.”
“Los tres golpes” ("Three Blows/Strikes") constitutes a representative Cervantes danza. It contains the traditional eight-bar phrase structure, and is laden with the amphibrach rhythm, filling the piece with joy and liveliness. This danza begins in E minor and ends in E major, and its title refers to three accented notes which occur all throughout the piece.²⁴

Figure 4.8. “Los tres golpes.” The three accented “strikes” can be seen in mm. 1-2, 9-10, 25, and 29-30.

²⁴ Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 85. The high degree of rhythmic syncopation in “Los tres golpes” would eventually be transplanted in the United States in ragtime music in the decades after Cervantes’s life.
Cervantes’s European training gave him a leg up on both his predecessors and contemporaries in terms of proficiency at the piano. Receiving formal training allowed him to add extra technical flourishes and etude-like passages in his danza. Two such examples present in the danzas “Interrumpida” (“Interrupted”) and “La carcajada” (“Laughter”). Both feature the classic Cuban creolized rhythms. At the start of “Interrumpida,” rapid broken octave jumps and a hand crossing give the performer an opportunity to demonstrate dexterity at the keyboard.

Figure 4.9. The first two lines of “Interrumpida.”
“La carcajada” takes the demands for high pianism to an even greater level. Written using double thirds, there are etude-like passages all throughout this piece. In both sections, the right hand is required to perform pianistic gymnastics to cover thirds, sixths, and octaves. In the B section, the left hand gets its opportunity to span octaves, and a chromatic descent illustrates the laughter Cervantes wanted to represent. All together, the benefit of Cervantes’s Parisian training allowed his danzas to be elevated in complexity when compared to Saumell’s. All of Cervantes’s danzas would represent the emerging Cuban musical identity, to a higher degree than his predecessors ever did.

![Figure 4.10. “La carcajada.” Note mm. 24-25, where the high chromaticism is written.](image)
In addition to his solo danzas, Cervantes also crafted three for piano duet for four hands: “La camagüeyana” (“Woman from Camagüey”), “Los delirios de Rosita” (“Rosita’s Delusions”), and “Los muñecos” (“The Dolls”). These were all written during the New York exile, and allow for more of an orchestral sound in the absence of instrumental ensemble abilities. This granted more harmonic ability for the composer, along with more sound and more complex rhythms. “La camagüeyana” is of special note in the nationalist strain of Cervantes. This Cuban province, Camagüey, was crucially important during the Ten Years’ War, which was underway during his exile. The high number of West Africans and Haitians in this region would allow for greater musical and rhythmic variety. Its opening resembles the traditional paseo introduction. In the B section, highly rhythmic elements are present; it is filled with the tresillo and the tied habanera rhythm for the piano secondo along with the cinquillo melody for the piano primo.26

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26 Williams, “Ignacio Cervantes,” 68-70.
Cervantes would mirror his predecessor Saumell in placing high premiums on the titles of his danzas, which present some questions on performance interpretations. First editions provided little phrasing and dynamic information, and nearly no tempo directions. This ambiguity leaves to the performer most of the decision-making power on these points. Along with these interpretive challenges, Cervantes — and to a somewhat similar extent Saumell — required the infusion of the Cuban idea of sandunga: a pronounced interpretive flair. This would avoid the monotony that may come from rendering pieces in a dry, academic manner. Performers were therefore expected to liven the danzas with high expressiveness while keeping their forms intact.

As for Cervantes’s danza titles, each was evocative, requiring examination and consideration before performance. This was the age of programmatic music, and as such, titles would give direction to the performer in terms of mood, character, and tone. This is clearly evident in “Adios a Cuba,” where poignancy and mournfulness are required. In other danzas, like “¡No bailes más!” repeated accented eighth notes break up the flow of the line, hampering smooth dancing, representing the title. The long, florid lines in “Almendares” represent the sinuous curves of the Cuban river of the same name. “Homenaje” (“Tribute”) is dedicated to Manuel Saumell and is lush and lyrical, as many of Saumell contradanzas were.

Ignacio Cervantes had a remarkable life, and an even more remarkable impact on the musical history of his island. His works showed that length and excessive virtuosity were not needed to capture the spirit of freedom and beauty. His danzas are each special in that they can be executed within just a few minutes, but in each of those moments are characters bursting with

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27 Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 88. This idea of sandunga would be diffused into the Caribbean as the danza spread; it would come to be known in Puerto Rico as jaleo. This designation also mirrors Saumell in his demands for precise rhythmic notation and interpretations.
individuality and expressivity. As the twentieth century came on, the danza began its decline, but
one final surprise was in store for this form, perfected by Saumell and Cervantes.

Figure 4.12. The last photograph taken of Ignacio
Cervantes prior to his death in 1905.

The Danza’s Farewell: Ernesto Lecuona (1895-1963)

At the onset of the twentieth century, the danza had just about run its course as a form.
Newer ones were rising, and slowly the danza would start to fade out of popular fashion. Though
some of its elements drifted and embedded into these future genres, the danza itself did not bear
as important a role in Cuban culture as it did during Cervantes’s life. In spite of this, a few
composers were still working on the danza, stretching its remaining fibers to their ultimate limit.
They continued, as Cervantes did, to use the piano as its main vehicle, continuing to express
nationalism in its composition. Of these final danza pioneers (of which Maria Cervantes was
one), one would stand out above all the others, sending the danza into its sunset with pride and
dignity: Ernesto Lecuona. The danzas of Lecuona formed the final link in the danza heritage. His work was the finalization Cervantes’s, and musical connections between the two are readily evident.

Ernesto Lecuona was born on 6 August 1895 in Guanabacoa, a township in Havana. He began his musical studies with his sister Ernestina, giving his first concert at age five, and throughout his life would become a major international performer. He attended the National Conservatory and upon his graduation in 1913 was unanimously awarded the First Prize and Gold Medal of his class. He performed internationally, organizing orchestras and touring both Europe and the United States. In the early years of the twentieth century, Lecuona became the chief internationally known Cuban musician. He was a virtuoso at the piano and a composer of a number of zarzuelas and canciones. He was a prolific composer, churning out compositions at a stunning pace. In his compositions he fought against the growing societal tide of rather stiff racism by pushing Afro-Cuban musical themes into all his works. He revived the danza almost by himself, composing over seventy between 1910 and 1930. His danzas, like Cervantes’s, were written for the concert hall, and not necessarily for salon dancing. His style mirrored the Romantic spirit of the early twentieth century composers like Maurice Ravel, whom Lecuona knew as a friend. They were personal and intimate, picturesque and descriptive. Published in three sets, beginning with Danzas Cubanas in 1929, they bear the same elements Cervantes infused into his danzas: the cincoillo reigned as the prime rhythmic feature, and conservatism marked the harmonies and melodies. He employed a Romantic flair while avoiding the

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28 Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 88-9.

29 Orovio, Cuba from A to Z, 122.
showiness eschewed by both Cervantes and Saumell. The overall form would be maintained, with some exceptions. Lecuona danzas sometimes deviated from the two-part structure, with some being ternary (ABA), some with expanded B sections, and some with only one section.  

This was likely the greatest amount of experimentation that could be done here while keeping the genre intact; these were, after all, the final years of this form. The farewell of the danza was fully underway.

Of the Lecuona danzas, “La comparsa” became the most well known. In Cuba, a “comparsa” is a carnival procession featuring singing and drumming, and this danza demonstrates this image in both dynamic and compositional ways. It was written when Lecuona was fifteen, and is set over a perpetual left hand cinquillo. “La comparsa” bears dynamic and melodic features which mimic the procession as it passes along a street. It has a soft beginning, a strong fortissimo middle section, and a long decrescendo at its end. In this way, the listener is essentially invited to imagine being on the street, or reclining on a balcony, watching as the carnival passes by.

Music softly wafts toward them at the carnival emerges from the distance; they

![Figure 4.13a. “La comparsa,” beginning.](image)

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30 Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 89-90. Lecuona’s other two volumes of danzas would come in 1930 and 1945 under the titles *Danzas Afrocubanas* and *Nineteenth-Century Cuban Danzas*, respectively.

31 Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 90.
stand in the midst of the festival as it passes before them; they watch at the carnival carries on
down the road. Such was the vivid, evocative nature of Lecuona’s danza.

The nineteenth century in Cuba represents the high life of both the contradanza and its
offspring, the danza. As the form faded, it in no way disappeared totally from Cuban, or
Caribbean, life. Instead, a most unbelievable international diffusion began, and the rhythms born
in Cuba would spread to a host of nations all around the Caribbean, extending further than
Saumell or Cervantes likely thought it ever could.
Chapter 5: The Evolution and International Legacy of the Contradanza

The Contradanza Evolves and Spreads Abroad

Music can be used to communicate current events and mark historical moments. This is clearly evident with the contradanza and all it did for Cuba during the nineteenth century. The power of this form would soon reach far beyond Cuban shores. On the island, the contradanza evolved and gave rise to a series of new forms. Outside Cuba, nations all around the Caribbean used the creolized rhythms of the contradanza in their own music, forging their own national identities. In this chapter, the evolution and international legacy will be discussed. Many of the dances which took root in the aftermath of the Cuban contradanza and danza are still a part of the various island cultures in the present day, demonstrating the power of the original Cuban rhythms.

Figure 5.1. Map of the Caribbean and Central America
Outgrowths of the Contradanza in Cuba: Danzón, Canción, Tumba

Even as the Cuban contradanza — and the renamed danza in the late nineteenth century — was making its great impact in the nation, a successor would slowly begin its rise. Beginning around 1879, the danzón (which literally means “big danza”) became the national dance of Cuba for over the next half century. It was further cultivated in neighboring Caribbean islands like Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. From there, other nations felt its impact, including Mexico, where it held even greater longevity than it did in Cuba.¹

The origin of this new form came on 1 January 1879, as composer Miguel Failde (1852-1921) premiered one of the first ever danzones in Cuba, “Las alturas de Simpson” (“Simpson Heights”). The danzón, of course, was presaged by Manuel Saumell, as his composition “La Tedezco” would bear musical elements that formed the identity of the upcoming danzón. Evidence of this new form was already drifting around the island from around the 1850s, but this performance in 1879 marked its entrance into Cuban society. This premiere also marked a milestone for the form, generating the preeminent dance of Cuba for the next half century and beyond.²

The greatest difference between the danzón and the danza came in its rondo-like form. Its A section recurs throughout, and makes great use of the cinquillo rhythm, in both melody and accompaniment. Its character mirrored that of the primo section of a Saumell contradanza. New sections, coming after the A, alternated in instrumental focus and character. In this way, the

¹ Peter Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 92.
² Ned Sublette, Cuba and its Music (Chicago: Chicago Review Press Incorporated, 2004), 247. Saumell’s contradanza, “La Tedezco,” did indeed serve as a preface to the future danzón, but one critical rhythm of the danzón, the cinquillo, was not widely used by Saumell, neither in “La Tedezco” nor in the great majority of his contradanzas. This rhythm would come to mark the danzón.
danzón required a multitude of different melodies in its development. The sources for these melodies could come from many places, including street vendor calls, rumba, or boleros. The need for more melodies required the danzón to be longer than the contradanza was, and this came to pass. Such melodic infiltrates crossed the Caribbean Sea and made impacts in ragtime and jazz bands in New Orleans, a sister city to Havana. New Orleans, of course, was greatly influenced by the French Creole culture of both Cuba and Haiti. Now, the danzón did not simply materialize from thin air. It was a direct descendant of the contradanza. Its ascent was rapid and dramatic, and as played by both Black and mixed-race Cubans, the danzón became the focus of dancers and listeners in all social classes and races in Cuba as the nineteenth century drew to a close. Finally, as compared with the danza, the danzón bore an even more leisurely tempo, which would give dancers chances to take breaks between the dances. This was no doubt be a relief to them, given Cuba’s warm climate. There was also more musical and instrumental variety. The rondo form — ABACA — allowed different instruments to be featured like soloists in different sections, while keeping the main theme recurrent throughout to give the entire danzón strong unity. Danzón became the preeminent Cuban dance until the rise of son in the 1920s, and its decline was made complete around the 1940s. From danzón emerged two influential genres in the 1950s: mambo and cha-cha-chá. Danzón further became a passion in Mexico, after its importation from Cuba. In fact, the first Mexican danzón came only five years after the Faiîde premiere in Cuba. One need look no further for the impact of danzón in Mexico than to the works of Arturo Márquez Navarro (b. 1950), who has written nine danzones for an

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3 Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 93-95.
4 Sublette, Cuba and its Music, 248.
array of orchestral arrangements. The most famous of them, Danzón No. 2 (1994) bears all the elements as those written in Cuba during the ending decades of the nineteenth century, demonstrating the impact of this form in Mexico. Danzón No. 2 is written for the full orchestra, and just as the Cuban danzón was; the rondo form is present, and different instruments take precedence at different times of the piece.

From the rhythms of the contradanza would come other forms of music and dance, two of which bear mentioning for their impact both inside and outside Cuba. The canción habanera, or “Havana-style song,” rose up in the 1840s. This song form was intended more for listening than for dancing, and it was nurtured as a form of urban song for piano and vocalists. The term habanera came to denote a more melancholic song, and it entered into Cuban zarzuelas and salons. Such habaneras circulated around the Caribbean, as well as Venezuela, Mexico, Argentina, and other nations in Latin America. In Europe, the habanera was co-opted into concert pieces by Ravel (Rapsodia Española, 1898) and Debussy (“La Puerto del Vino,” 1913). Another dance form, the tumba francesa, grew from the contradanza. It was a product of the Afro-Haitian immigrants who flooded into Cuba in the early 1800s. These dances were a combination of both European and African musical traditions. Within the tumba francesa, the amphibrach and the cinquillo can be found. These rhythms, derived from African origin, are basic to the Cuban contradanza complex. This contradanza family would be the dominant music of the time, diffused mostly by Black and mixed-race musicians.6

5 Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 96-7.
6 Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 100-1.
This was, of course, only the beginning of the evolution of the contradanza. As the twentieth century proceeded, Cuba saw another form arise that they could claim exclusively as their own: the son. And, as the danzón had, the son could find its roots in the contradanza.

**Linking the Contradanza to the Cuban son**

The son constituted the predominant dance music genre in Cuba in the twentieth century. It became an essential icon of Cuban culture and identity, most notably in the eastern regions of the country. The greatest achievement of the son was its allowance for greater rhythmic invention. The influence of the contradanza upon the son is important, and a near-straight line can be drawn between these two seminal Cuban genres. In fact, the contradanzas which were in vogue in the 1850s-60s in Havana revealed features that ultimately became associated with the son, such as melodies in duet format, the presence of the clave rhythm, syncopation, vocal refrains, and a two-part structure. The son can be defined as a distinct creole voice-and-accompaniment dance song in duple meter. It features were as follows:

- performed by a sextet or septet of instruments
- two part structure
- prominent accompaniment role of an ostinato
- distinctive rhythms, especially based on the tresillo
- the presence of the clave rhythm

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9 Manuel, “From Contardanza to Son,” 186.
The earliest son came about in the late nineteenth century in the rural eastern provinces of Cuba, making its way to Havana in the early 1900s. Here, in Havana, the son grew and matured, incorporating elements from the percussive rumba, the song-oriented canción, and the bolero. Once more, Afro-Cubans did a great deal to implement these rhythmic adaptations. In lower-class taverns and tenements, the son was cultivated and enhanced. Some elements that were forged into this new form could have been wafting throughout Havana before the twentieth century began, but it was at the top of the new century that the son blossomed into the magnificent form it would eventually become.10

The greatest distinction between these two genres was their method of performance. While the contradanza was generally an instrumental experience, the son was a vocal song. Despite this, many contradanzas were parts of popular songs, and several references from the nineteenth century show that contradanza composers indeed did use popular song melodies in their writings. Such sources could be derived from street-vendor calls; in fact, some catchy contradanzas could even have prompted spontaneous vocal calls shouted by audience members. This tradition could be seen in the cities of Havana and Santiago de Cuba. A few contradanzas, in their B sections (or segundo sections) included notated short vocal phrases to be sung. This demonstrates a strong connection between the contradanza and the son. One example of this can be seen in the contradanza “¡Ay! Clara dame tu yema” (“Clara, give me your yolk”), composed by Raimundo Valenzuela in 1870. This is not meant to be sung entirely, but there is some vocal

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10 Manuel, “From Contradanza to Son,” 186-7. There is also evidence which suggests that features of the son were established in vernacular music in both Havana and possibly Santiago de Cuba in the 1850s. It would be the danza that reigned supreme during these decades, once again suggesting the son was an outgrowth of the danza. (“From Contradanza to Son,” 204).
text included in its second section. The print is difficult to read on the score, but it was clearly written in by the composer.11

The son grew over the course of several decades by combining elements from eastern and western Cuba. Several contemporary musical genres combined to form the son, and the contradanzas of the 1850s provided the baseline for this musical generation. Havana and Santiago de Cuba were the cities in which the son took hold, becoming yet another incredibly special and uniquely Cuban form.12 The danzón, canción, tumba francesa, and son were directly

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derived from the Cuban contradanza. The impacts of this wonderful genre were felt in Cuba for many decades after its largest contributors had passed on. Even more remarkable than this legacy within the island of Cuba is the spread and influence of the contradanza outside Cuba. All throughout Latin American and the Central American continent, nations found these rhythms irresistible to their own musical trajectories. From the islands of Puerto Rico and Haiti, to the English-dominated nations of Jamaica, Belize, and the United States, the contradanza spread and implanted into cultures and musical heritages. Each nation adapted and expanded upon the contradanza complex.

Puerto Rico

On the island of Puerto Rico, the contradanza had a remarkable impact, and its trajectory mirrored that of Cuba. Its origin on the island in the nineteenth century could be traced the version of the country dance in Spain instead of England, somewhere at the beginning of the colonial period. Dance was paramount in Puerto Rico, holding positions of value in social and cultural events like parties and games. Other festivities included comparsas, special street processions. The contradanza likely came to Puerto Rico in the 1820s. The dance was not simply done for entertainment; it served as a marker for social distinction, where dancers could exhibit their refinement and elegance.13

The Puerto Rican contradanza evolved from the Cuban contradanza in terms of the choreography of the dance. Composers used a mixture of moods, from mournful and sentimental to cheerful and boisterous. The dance scene therefore was lively, and surrounded the

13 Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 114-5, 117.
contradanza. As it did in Cuba, the first part of the dance was less rhythmic and syncopated than the second, which was lively and lilting. The majority of Puerto Rican contradanzas were written in 2/4, and included the two against three syncopation. They were further celebrated for their rhythmic flair, featuring a unique, special aspect: the elastic *tresillo* — a rhythmic pattern somewhat similar to the triplet. It would be “elastic” in the method of playing, requiring one note to be enlarged over another to creolize the rhythm. Such patterns separated the Puerto Rican contradanza from its Cuban counterpart.\(^{14}\) The rhythm of the elastic *tresillo* can be seen below, and in the example of “La mulata,” an 1850s-era Puerto Rican contradanza. In this early work, the habanera rhythm is present in the second section.

![Figure 5.3. The elastic tresillo. The rhythm could take any of the forms shown here.](image)

![Figure 5.4. The first two lines of “La mulata” (1850s).](image)

\(^{14}\) Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 120, 122-3. The distinctive flair of the Puerto Rican contradanza would become known as *jaleo*. So distinct was this feature that foreign performers would have trouble interpreting it correctly.
The histories of Puerto Rico and Cuba track together in a similar way. In the middle of
the nineteenth century, both islands bore the ignoble distinction of being the final Spanish
colonies in Latin America. The abolitionist spirit was strong in both islands, and was shared by
all races. Here, a predisposition to the Afro-Caribbean rhythms generated a new form in Puerto
Rico, the *merengue*. This would become the first national dance of P.R. in the 1840s. The
contradanza, as important as it was to the island, was somewhat rigid and stiff in its execution,
not lending itself well to couple dancing. This new merengue was far more sensual and
intimately suggestive than the contradanza, with a slightly different form as well. Whereas the
Cuban contradanza comprised short sections that could be repeated, the merengue was extended
in its second part primarily. Furthermore, more sections would be added, turning it into a multi-
sectional dance. It retained the *paseo* of the Cuban contradanza, and added two or even three
more sections after. This seductive merengue embraced and celebrated Caribbean values as
opposed to the colonialist ideals of decency and propriety. Puerto Rico was beginning to develop
its own cultural identity, and its dance styles would subvert the stuffy colonial dances.\(^\text{15}\) In this
way, P.R. and Cuba are linked together in their use of music to promote nationalism and
independence. So subversive was the merengue that Puerto Rican governor Pezuela prohibited
its performance in 1849. As with almost all such actions, its prohibition did little to halt the
spread; indeed it may have enhanced it. The order ended around 1852, allowing the merengue to
recover, but during the time of its prohibition, the merengue would be disguised under a host of

\(^{15}\) Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 124-8, 137.
other titles, one of which took hold and eventually become the successor to both the merengue and the contradanza: simply, \textit{danza}$.^{16}$

The Puerto Rican danza was an outgrowth of the Cuban contradanza. Rising to prominence in the 1840s-50s, its generation and dominance can be clearly attributed to the importation of the habanera and creolized rhythms from Cuba around the same time. Some differences exist, of course, as Puerto Rico would place its own stamp on the dance form, but the danza of P.R. would not have blossomed in any way without the influence of Cuba. One such difference came in the method of extension. The danzas in Cuba only lasted only about one minute when played through completely; the only way to extend them was by repetition of the sections, or of the danza in its entirety. Composers in Puerto Rico took a different track. Their method of extension allowed for the addition of more sections. In them, the \textit{paseo} introduction was repeated only once, and without much syncopation. Subsequently, however, more sections were added, enlivened by the creolized rhythms of the habanera, \textit{cinquillo}, \textit{amphibrach}, and the Puerto Rican specialty, the elastic \textit{tresillo}$.^{17}$ Two composers elevated the Puerto Rican danza to its highest degree: Manuel Gregorio Tavárez (1843-83) and Juan Morel Campos (1857-96). In their time, the merengue would give way to the danza; the former term would now be used to describe individual parts within the resultant danzas$.^{18}$

Tavárez created beautiful danzas. Born in San Juan, he studied internationally in the 1850s. He returned home in 1860 after a stroke which impaired his hearing and the use of his

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$^{16}$ Manuel, \textit{Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean}, 131-2. The fear of Pezuela’s retribution dissipated in the 1850s, allowing the merengue to return to prominence; military band would include merengues in their evening \textit{retretas}: public concerts held twice weekly in village squares.

$^{17}$ Manuel, \textit{Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean}, 142-3, 147.

$^{18}$ Manuel, \textit{Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean}, 133.
hands. His first danzas, “La lopita” (1861) and “Como me mira el viejo” (1863), marked the beginning of the danza as a Puerto Rican genre. Tavárez was familiar with the works of Manuel Saumell, and he sought to lift up the danza in Puerto Rico in the same way that Saumell did in Cuba. His sophistication and finesse infused them with creolized identity while retaining the light classical salon/concert hall style of his Parisian training. He is known in P.R. as the “father of the danza,” just as Saumell was known as the “father of the contradanza” in Cuba.\(^\text{19}\) Juan Morel Campos eclipsed Tavárez in his time, and his danzas would display more variety, tunefulness, and originality. He was born in Ponce, and trained on many instruments, including piano. His career commenced in the 1870s, and he wrote at a rapid rate, producing 283 danzas, along with nearly 550 other pieces. His solo performances of his danzas allowed for their popularization in the public. Of his danzas, 75 were notated for piano solo, while others were intended for dance bands. Some contained Romantic lyrics and included voice and piano together. Morel Campos died after a heart attack in 1896.\(^\text{20}\) It is, therefore, no understatement to offer the view that the Puerto Rican danza would not have existed without the influence of the Cuban contradanza and its pioneers, Saumell and Cervantes. The roots are all present, and the impact clearly visible. The reach of the contradanza, however, did not stop in Puerto Rico by any means.

\(^\text{19}\) Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 135. Though there are a number of parallels between the lives of Tavárez and Saumell, the style of this danzas would mirror those of Ignacio Cervantes more so than Saumell, in their melodic configurations and their overall lilt.

\(^\text{20}\) Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 140-1.
The Dominican Republic

In the Dominican Republic, the contradance was likely introduced in both the Spanish and French forms, with the French style becoming more extensive, lending itself to greater creolization than the Spanish dance. Noted in the D.R. around 1747, this adaptation and evolution from the original French mirrors the same in Cuba. In the 1820s, the contradance was becoming a local, distinctly creolized entity, and in the D.R. it would be called *tumba* or *tumba dominicana*. As the 1850s came, the merengue arrived in the Dominican Republic, evolving from the contradance. A local model of the danza came soon thereafter, and it would bore similarities to the versions present in both Cuba and Puerto Rico. The *tumba dominicana* was written in a distinctly native flavor, in both its melodic phrasing and its rhythms, which were syncopated with African style elements. The dance aspect retained the affinity present in its reach origins, just as it had in Cuba. The *tumba* bore an eight-bar dominant arpeggiated figure, which could be played on an according, with the alternation of the *cinquillo* and amphibrach figures, as can be seen in this melodic example.

![Figure 5.5 Dominican tumba melody.](image)

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21 Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 158. The origin of the term *tumba* in this context has some dispute, with links existing to West African and Congolese words meaning “drum” and with links to an Andalusian dance with the same name.

22 Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 156.

The contradance in the Dominican Republic advanced throughout the nineteenth century to become a through-composed, instrumental composition in medium tempo, with a prominent habanera rhythm. Its early version were labeled *meringue contradanzeado*, or contradanced merengue. This constituted the primary source for all the merengues on the island. Banned from the middle class salons in the middle of the nineteenth century, it would take hold in the lower classes. In the 1870s, it was transformed once more, with text added in a similar manner to those in some Cuban contradanzas in the 1860s. The Dominican counterparts also shed the stuffy pretentiousness of the elites, and became faster, more rhythmic, and rustic in character. More militaristic rhythms and percussive instruments were added as well.\(^\text{24}\)

The merengue was eventually reborn under the name *danza*, just as in Puerto Rico and Cuba. It would be the dominant salon dance in the 1860s and onward, primarily modeled on the Puerto Rican danza. Most Dominican danzas followed the model of P.R. in structure, and also take on Cuban characteristics in style. They contained a *paseo* introduction of about eight measures, followed by two to three additional sections, concluding with a reprise of the first. Dominican composers were also creating danzas that may have exerted influence in the opposite direction, reaching Puerto Ricans. A clear example of the Dominican style, showing both Puerto Rican and Cuban influences, can be seen in the 1864 danza “El sueño” (“The Dream”). Composed by Mariano Arredondo, it is Cuban in style and the use of the habanera rhythms, yet Puerto Rican in length and structure. It bears the traditional *paseo* and is divided into four 16-bar sections, any of which could be repeated.\(^\text{25}\)

\(^{24}\) Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 162-9.

\(^{25}\) Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 170-3.
After Arredondo, compositions by Pablo Claudio (1855-99), became the most distinguished in representing D.R. danzas in Puerto Rican form. He named his works *danzas dominicanas*, setting them apart from Puerto Rican danzas. They were filled with creolized syncopations and bear upwards of five sections. As in Cuba and elsewhere, the *paseo* openings were straightforward and unsyncopated. The *danza dominicana* reached its peak around the end of the nineteenth century. After this, many became more vocally centered, with extended

Figure 5.6. “El sueño.”
melodies in romantic style. The danzas of the Dominican Republic were special in their own right. Even though they possessed influences from Cuba and Puerto Rico, they were still individualistic and unique to their own island. They took the traditions of their neighbors in Cuba and Puerto Rico and adapted them into their own culture. Such was the power of the contradanza. Here, as in Puerto Rico, it was Cuba and her composers that laid the groundwork for this remarkable international dissemination.

**Haiti**

The contradance would also find its way into Haiti. Here, many of the familiar terms already discussed would be stylized to be more French. Therefore, “contradance” would become “contredanse” and “merengue” would become “méringue.” With this in mind, as was true all about the Caribbean, the contredanse formed the foundation for many of the social dances in Haiti. Boundaries dissolved in the New World as it spread all around. In Haiti, links to the Cuban and Puerto Rican danza formed the Haitian méringue. This term was used to describe a host of musical styles, and included the syncopated cinquillo rhythm that was so prominent at this time. The contredanse was common in both urban and rural society in Haiti until the mid-twentieth century. Performed as parts of larger community celebrations, the contredanse even reached into Haitian Vodou ceremonies. In the early twentieth century, as was seen in the canciones in Cuba, the contredanse was later transformed into a creole song. There were class divisions in the spread of the dance, with lower class Haitians preferring a faster-paced méringue.

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26 Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 174-5.

and upper class elites favoring slower-paced dances. Slow meringues were not necessarily good for dancing; instead, these were preferred for salon concerts, usually held in private homes.28

One such slow meringue in the late nineteenth century was titled “Chouconne,” composed by Michel Mauléart Monton in 1884. Based on a poem, the melody of this chorus can be recognized by non-Haitians as the tune of “Yellow Bird” — a tune that was thought of appearing in Jamaica. Variations of this tune floated all about the Caribbean, but it indeed originated in Haiti. “Chouconne” features a five-note rhythmic pattern that would become known the quintolet — the French name for the

Figure 5.7. Second half of “Chouconne.”

cinquillo. It pervaded Haitian folk, salon, and popular music. As in other nations, Haitians struggled with how to express their desires to gain international respect while maintaining their native musical traditions. Saumell bore this fight in Cuba, and Tavárez did in Puerto Rico. In Haiti, Ludovic Lamothe (1882-1953) sought to bridge this divide. He created both slow and fast meringues; he studied in Paris and would teach and perform in Haiti. His chief composition, “La dangereuse,” is typical of the slow meringues of the time, with lyrical melodies and little dynamic markings.

On the island of Haiti, there was another division from the patterns set down in Cuba and Puerto Rico, namely in unorthodox notations. Meringues written by Justin Elie (1883-1952) were notated showing alternations between measures of 2/4 and 5/8. Most Haitian performers would play the 5/8 measures like a 2/4, changing the five eighth notes to a syncopated five-note rhythm.

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29 Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 220-23.

30 Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 223. Other composers in Haiti would attempt to bridge this divide as well, including Justin Elie (1883-1952), who would write several meringues and would become one of the most well known Haitian composers outside the island.
in 2/4. This metric variation represented the struggle to maintain native flavor in the meringue. To exclude it forced composers to weaken their nationalist identity and diminish the Haitian musical spirit. Even worse, the bond to their African musical heritage could be severed, a wholly unacceptable outcome. Methods of this notation can be seen in both examples shown above. In “Chouconne,” the five even pulses are placed over the duple meter as a quintolet (or cinquillo in Spanish tradition). In “La dangereuse,” it is notated in a more standard form. Variances depended on the choice of the composer, and alternations in performance were also quite common.31

The English Caribbean: Jamaica and Belize

The island of Jamaica also bore influence over the quadrille and its development. Laborers from Jamaica introduced the quadrille to the Central American mainland in Costa Rica, where it would grow into a local variant under the Spanish name cuadrilla and develop a repertoire of over fifty dances. Many of the songs in the near Caribbean and Central American nations of Panama, St. Kitts, and Trinidad also came from Jamaica. In some parts of the island, quadrille was performed by percussion-heavy groups featuring drums, graters, and maracas, with melodies being performed by harmonicas.32 In Jamaica itself, two forms of the quadrille would come to be known: the ballroom, or European type; and the camp style, with lines of dancers. The Jamaican quadrille was a forerunner of both ska and reggae with echoes of the older form showing up in contemporary Jamaican popular music, being performed by the notable Wailers in Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 224-7. Haitian composers Occilius and Oclude Jeanty (father and son) would attempt to notate the Haitian meringue and its rhythms in 1882; they would provide the descriptions of the quintolet. The application of rubato in the quintolet would mirror the elastic tresillo in Puerto Rico.

31 Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 224-7. Haitian composers Occilius and Oclude Jeanty (father and son) would attempt to notate the Haitian meringue and its rhythms in 1882; they would provide the descriptions of the quintolet. The application of rubato in the quintolet would mirror the elastic tresillo in Puerto Rico.

32 Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 236-7.
“Ska Quadrille.”33 But, of course, not all figure dances in the English Caribbean would come from Jamaica.

Among all the nations in Central America, the nation of Belize is unique and remarkable. It is, notably, the only non-island nation in the Caribbean where English is the primary language; it was also the only British colony in Central America. Until independence in 1981, Belize was known by its colonial name, British Honduras.34 Belize would, early in its history, become home to the Garinagu, also called Garifuna, or “Black Caribs” — individuals from Africa who would arrive there. The Garinagu inhabited not only Belize, but also long stretches of Nicaragua as well. The legacy of the quadrille in Belize can be heard in the work of legendary Garifuna singer, Paul Nabor (1928-2014). Nabor was known for singing paranda, or ballad singing. Nabor was also a talented guitarist, and used this instrument as his main melodic vehicle in his works.35 In one of his most famous songs, “Naguya Ne” (“I Am Moving On”), the instrumental accompaniment bears two familiar Latin rhythms: the amphibrach and something similar to the elastic tresillo, as shown below:

Figure 5.9. Nabor, “Naguya Ne.”

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34 Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 236.

The melody of this song does not bear any remarkable Latin-style rhythms; it is more so in the music underneath the tune where the creolized rhythms appear. The song is based on a personal subject, bears creolized rhythms, and features a main melody with accompaniment. In this way, Nabor’s “Naguya Ne” tracks toward the nineteenth century Puerto Rican danza and the Cuban canción. Another trailblazing Garifuna musical artist, Andy Palacio (1960-2008), worked extensively in Belize and internationally to preserve and spread Garifuna music. In his final studio album, Wátina, released in 2007, some rhythmic elements present that adhere to the quadrille heritage of the Garinagu. In the single of the same title, “Wátina,” through the strong Garifuna drumming (characteristic of this style of music), the three-two clave rhythm is evident, though in a somewhat more subtle way. Palacio did a great deal to advance the Garifuna musical heritage, right until his untimely death in January 2008.

In addition to the impact of the Garinagu, the Belizean brukdown is also derived from the quadrille.36 This musical genre is a specialty for Belizean Kriols, who primarily live in the Belize District, as opposed to the Garifuna, who occupy more of the southern districts in the country. Among the most prominent of the brukdown musicians was Wilfred Peters (1931-2010), informally known as Mista Peetaz. Well versed in a host of styles (including quadrille), Peters was named to the Order of the British Empire (MBE) by Queen Elizabeth II in 1997; he also had the honor of performing for The Queen upon one of her visits to Belize.37 In countless songs by Peters, the three-two clave rhythm can be very clearly heard, including in “Good Mawnin’ Belize” and “Old Home Belize.” In both of these songs, the three-two clave is struck

37 Stone, “Diaspora Sounds from Caribbean Central America,” 230.
percussively all throughout. These creolized Cuban rhythms made their impact into even the English-dominant nations, like Jamaica and Belize. From there, they extended their reach even deeper into the Caribbean islands.

**Elsewhere in the Caribbean**

The influence of the creolized contradanza and its rhythms took hold all around the Caribbean. In St. Lucia, the quadrille was introduced by both the French and English in their colonial exploits in the early 1800s. The St. Lucian *kwadril* is essentially a European-style dance, linked to economic social power. It was, naturally, adapted to fit its new Caribbean home, with melodies being altered and improvised and percussive instruments, off-beat phrasing, and singing being added. Similar traditions would emerge in the Virgin Islands and Trinidad and Tobago, where rhythms became freer than ever before; in the Bahamas, various combinations of instruments augmented the European dance form. In Panama, the quadrille was also important: in that country, guitars, saxophones, and drums were added to the instrumental canon. In Martinique and Guadeloupe, the quadrille also holds importance in culture, dance, and for society at large. The same can be said for the island of Dominica (not to be confused with the Dominican Republic), where bèlè is its importance dance. Bèlè bears strong ties with West African styles, as does the creolized contradanza. Bèlè is important in Dominica, and its impact was not restricted to the nineteenth or twentieth centuries; it continued into later years.

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In all these places, the fingerprints of the Cuban contradanza can clearly be seen. But the nearest nation to Cuba — and the one to which strong ties would be bound in the nineteenth century — was the United States of America. In the U.S., the influence and rhythms of the contradanza became rooted into musical history and culture, and would find roots so strong that well into the 20th century the musical heritage would continue.

**The United States**

In the same way that Latin American music embraced multiple cultures from multiple continents, the music forged and born in the United States did as well. American composers sought out and integrated into their music ideas from all about the Caribbean and Latin America, and over time this synthesis created several uniquely American forms. Of all the Caribbean nations, the most enduring influences on the music of the U.S. would come from Cuba, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico. Cuba, however, had the longest impact. Cuba’s music presented a more equal blend of African and Spanish ingredients than that of other Latin American nations. The syncopated rhythms adopted most regularly by Black musicians had already heavily influenced Cuban music, and they did the same in the U.S. The habanera rhythm was also absorbed into American music by preserving the African “call-and-response” element; its rhythmic pattern could also be confined within one measure. In the 1930s, the Cuban son entered the U.S. through rumba. Other American idioms like jazz, blues, and ragtime also have links to the Cuban

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musical heritage. Traits of the contradanza can be seen in both of these forms, showing it was a foundation for a host of musical genres all about the Western hemisphere.

Cuba sits geographically near the United States, just over 100 miles from Florida. This proximity linked the two nations together in a number of ways, with music being one of them. Composers and performers went back and forth between the island and the U.S. for a host of reasons. L.M. Gottschalk visited Cuba a number of times, and ethnic Cubans themselves would often go to the United States, with Cervantes being a prime example, as he would sit in exile for years in New York City. He would return to the U.S. after his exile as well. Ernesto Lecuona appeared in concert in New York at age seventeen; in 1943 he would become Cuba’s honorary cultural attaché in the United States. Through these composers and others, the habanera and son would enter the mainstream of American popular music.42

As important as these Cuban influences were, Black musicians were the main vector through which the rhythms and influences of the Caribbean would enter music of the States. The city of New Orleans, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, provided musical contact between the two states, with New Orleans bearing sympathy to the Cuban aspiration of independence even before the Spanish-American War in 1898. Cuban music would further enter the U.S. through Mexico, and that impacted New Orleans’s musical traditions in the pre-jazz period. Around the 1880s, elements of Latin American music would begin to enter the U.S. In these final years of the nineteenth century, pianists like Jesse Pickett would use the habanera bass in his composition “The Dream.” This work had two parts, similar to the original Cuban contradanza. There was, however, one distinct difference: in “The Dream,” the first section was

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42 Roberts, The Latin Tinge, 7-8.
fast, and the second was a slow-drag with the blues. The addition of the blues into this habanera-style work shows the integration of Cuban elements into American music.\footnote{Roberts, The Latin Tinge, 34-5, 39.}

The habanera was also a part of New York music in the 1890s. This crossover increased as more Black musicians travelled to Cuba. There, they were exposed to many Cuban musical elements, which they would adopt. W. C. Handy (1873-1956), an American composer and musician, would travel to Cuba in 1900, and there he encountered the habanera/tango rhythm. He adopted this into his “St. Louis Blues” (1916), an instrumental version of the “Memphis Blues,” and the chorus of the “Beale Street Blues.” Handy thus became known as the Father of the Blues. In the “St. Louis Blues,” an introduction is presented as the first theme using the tango rhythm; it is then followed by a 4/4 jazz section.\footnote{Roberts, The Latin Tinge, 39-40, 48-9.}

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{figure_5.10.png}
\caption{Handy, “St. Louis Blues.”}
\end{figure}
the *paseos* in the Cuban contradanzas. This primary theme recurs throughout the piece.

In addition to the blues, the American genres of ragtime and jazz also saw themselves infiltrated by Latin American themes. The multi-strain, multi-rhythm dances were ideal for Caribbean experimentation. This allowed for musicians to improvise and change the conventional patterns they came into contact with. Legendary pianist Jelly Roll Morton would, in his “Tiger Rag,” use such templates. He borrowed from ragtime and the quadrille to create contrasts in his song form. These melodies also borrowed from creole folk songs and the Cuban *sones*. The quadrille form was the means for joining disparate musical materials together into cohesive forms. Thus, a link is made between the quadrille and ragtime and jazz. In addition to Morton, New York pianist and composer James P. Johnson also used the quadrille dance forms as the basis of his jazz compositions. His “Carolina Shout” was, in fact, a ragtime arrangement of a set dance.45

The most recognizable rag composer, even to non-musicians, is Scott Joplin (1868-1917). He also used Latin rhythms in his works. His rag “Solace” (1909) demonstrates links to the Cuban contradanza in several ways. Its opening has a *paseo* section (quite like Handy’s “St. Louis Blues”), and the habanera rhythm is present in the bass, and the *cinquillo* rhythm is visible in the melody of the first section. This rag is longer than any contradanza, of course, which links it to the evolving *danzón*, which was extended in a similar fashion.

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Morton, as mentioned, was greatly influenced by Latin music, asserting that a “Spanish tinge” was essential in the rhythms of jazz. Morton even suggested Spanish influence was not only necessary, but required, to give jazz its proper essence. But as the works of Joplin and Handy demonstrate, the Latin rhythmic infusion was also key for ragtime and blues. Indeed, the
Habanera’s *ritmo de tango* is near identical to that of the cakewalk rhythm.\(^46\) Tin Pan Alley ragtime bore the effects of the tango rhythm. The habanera also entered the pianistic style called stride.\(^47\) Indeed, the development of New York’s Latin music style came by a fusion of both Cuban and Puerto Ricans influences.\(^48\) By the 1930s, Latin styles had become fully immersed into the American musical idiom, with Cuban rhythms embedding into music, radio, bands, stage, and screen.\(^49\) In subsequent decades, Latin music was firmly established in popular music by way of Afro-Cuban jazz (Cubop) and the mambo.\(^50\) Cubop became another special offshoot of the Cuban rhythmic spirit, and one of its greatest pioneers bears mentioning: John Birks “Dizzy” Gillespie.

Dizzy Gillespie (1917-1993) was a creative leader in the Cubop movement. His interest in Latin music went back to his days working with Mario Bauzá in the early 1940s. He blended bebop, at the time on the cutting edge of jazz, with pure Afro-Cuban percussion and singing. He was committed to Latin-jazz as a style, commissioning works which held to the Afro-Cuban identity. Of all the jazz-men of the 1940s who used Afro-Cuban rhythms in their music, Gillespie superseded them all by displaying a greater understanding of the form than any of his contemporaries. He seamlessly blended Cuban musical approaches with his own, which allowed

\(^{49}\) Roberts, *The Latin Tinge*, 98.  
\(^{50}\) Roberts, *The Latin Tinge*, 113.
him to go beyond simply playing these Latin elements. Jazz itself would become more Latin under Gillespie’s influence.\textsuperscript{51} He ultimately visited Havana in the 1980s.

Dizzy worked with several leaders in the bebop movement of the 1940s in his efforts to “Latinize” jazz. Beginning with Charlie Parker (1920-1955), Gillespie forged a new genre of music during the 1940s, bridging the gap between American jazz and Afro-Cuban music. Gillespie became so well versed in the Afro-Cuban medium that he eclipsed even Charlie Parker in his comfort level expressing these rhythms.\textsuperscript{52} From as early as 1938, Gillespie began to explore and integrate Afro-Cuban musical rhythms into his own music. He began his exploration of Cubop along with Mario Bauzá (1911-1993), a Latin trumpeter, and Luciano “Chano” Pozo (1915-1948), a conga player, the latter of whom Gillespie met in the 1940s. Gillespie used broken, ostinato figures often present in the music of Latin bass players to realize his dream of creating a jazz big band. He bore a strong eagerness to understand, deploy, and interweave Cuban rhythms into the American band style. Along with Pozo, Gillespie’s band performed for the first time in Carnegie Hall on 29 September 1947, premiering “Cuban Be, Cuban Bop,” a two-part number employing traditional Cuban rhythms.\textsuperscript{53}

Chano Pozo did his best to instruct Gillespie’s band in the ways of Cuban rhythmic power. He often complained of the inadequacy of the band members when it came to capturing the Cuban rhythmic spirit of \textit{sandunga}, a spirit which infused the music of Ignacio Cervantes from the danza era. Pozo instructed the band as they travelled on tour busses, coaxing them to

\textsuperscript{51} Roberts, \textit{The Latin Tinge}, 114-17, 139-140.

\textsuperscript{52} Roberts, \textit{The Latin Tinge}, 120.

\textsuperscript{53} Sublette, \textit{Cuba and its Music}, 536-7. In addition to his work with Chano Pozo, Gillespie also utilized the service of another Cuban conguero (drummer) Diego Ibarra, who played with the famous Lecuona Boys, a hit Cuban band which toured the United States in 1941.
learn to embrace the Cuban rhythmic identity. As for Dizzy, his greatest contribution to the Afro-
Cuban musical canon was a tune he worked on with Chano Pozo, titled “Manteca” (“Lard”).

“Manteca” was somewhat ahead of its time, representing a great fusion of aesthetics between
American jazz and Afro-Cuban rhythms. Gillespie constructed the bridge for the tune, and it
ultimately became one of his greatest hits of all time. Following its release in 1947, scores of
American arrangers sought to emulate this new blended style, adding conga drums and bongos to
their own writings, in addition to the elements Gillespie championed. This new rhythmic
renaissance perked up American rhythms in a positive way.54

Dizzy Gillespie, Chano Pozo, and Mario Bauzá would be among the first to codify Afro-
Cuban rhythms into American jazz, forming one of the most emulated styles of jazz. “Manteca”
is a representation of this style. Pozo, for a long time, did not receive the credit he rightly
deserved in the creation of this tune. In fact, it was he who first presented the melodic idea to
Gillespie. The two of them together generated the wonderful score which would cement Afro-
Cuban elements into jazz. Gillespie called upon Gil Fuller to arrange it for the orchestra and in
1954 Arturo O’Farrill created an entire suite based on the work.55 Cubop began its decline in the
late 1950s.56

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In all these ways, the far reach of the creolized Cuban rhythms have changed the entire trajectory of music history in the West. All throughout the Caribbean and into the United States, these rhythms would successfully and permanently mark music and culture.

Outside the West: Japanese Ryūkōka

As surprising as it may seem, the influence of the contradanza went far beyond even the New World. There is evidence that these distinct rhythmic features would enter into music from Japan. From the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth, contradanza rhythms seeped into Japanese popular song. It is quite possible that this influence was diffused to

Figure 5.12. Dizzy Gillespie, “Manteca.” This is the score as written for the baritone saxophone.
Japan by way of the United States, not necessarily through Cuba directly. At this time, there were some growing contacts between Japan and the U.S., and since the strains of the contradanza were already present in the U.S. by this time, it is more than reasonable to assert they could have reached Japan in this way.

Popular music in Japan originated in the Meiji Era (ca. 1868-1912). The term ryūkōka, which means “popular song,” was used as a broad umbrella term to describe a number of popular songs. These songs had sung text related to current events or social trends. Hence, their popularity and relevance was often short-lived, as with thematic songs today. The texts of these songs were important as well, as at that time purely instrumental music was secondary in Japan. During the Meiji Era, Western culture and the concepts of democracy and liberalism entered and impacted Japan, both politically and musically. In the urban centers of Tokyo and Osaka, a speech-song called enka became popular. Enka songs were heard in music halls and tea houses, in outdoor venues and on street corners where papers with their lyrics were sold. Enka songs were directly political, so greater importance was placed on the text and its declamation than the music. Songs of this nature were half-shouted and half-chanted to ensure the text was well heard. Ryūkōka, on the other hand, was more legato, more so than enka songs. It is in ryūkōka songs that the links to the habanera can be heard.57 Ryūkōka rose up in the early decades of the twentieth century, around the 1920s, reaching its end in the 1960s. Typical ryūkōka songs were in the minor mode and bore adaptations to American idioms, including Latin rhythms.58 Both enka and ryūkōka are descendant from the same popular music source, but they would end up taking

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divergent paths. Both are relevant to understanding how popular and political music impacted Japan in these early years of the twentieth century. As it was in Cuba, ryūkōka songs were nationalist in nature, demonstrating another strong link to its usages in the Caribbean.

Three songs written using the ryūkōka style demonstrate these links. “Nihonbashi Kara,” written in 1932 is one such song, bearing Japanese lyrics. Its title, “nihonbashi” means “bridge to Japan” — and refers to an actual bridge in a business district in Tokyo, linking both sides of the Nihonbashi River, first built and completed in 1603. In this song, connections can be clearly made to Cuban canciones which employ the habanera rhythm. The traditional tango rhythm is present, and very prominent, in the bass line. The vocal melody of the song also bears resemblance to those of Cuban origin. The instrumental music in “Nihonbashi Kara” also has other characteristic Cuban rhythms, including the amphibrach. The first few measures (about :30 seconds) are represented below. The same can be said of two other ryūkōka songs from the twentieth century: “Matendo” (1929) and “Kamome Kanashiya” (“Sad Seagull,” 1930s). The melodies are sinuous and vary in their use of intervals. In each of these three songs, a multitude of instruments are used, both melodic and percussive. Unlike with enka, there is equal treatment given to the text and the music, with legato being used in the voice. Indeed, in “Nihonbashi Kara,” frequent instrumental breaks (where no text is sung) show its differentiation from enka, as here the music is allowed to proceed while the voice rests. There are a variety of instrumental solos, as well as the steady habanera bass. This song can be described as a Japanese tango, for all the elements that were present in the Caribbean music discussed above are here as well.

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The Cuban contradanza may be one of the most magical musical forms of all time. Its impact is evident all around the entirety of the Caribbean, and truly around the world. Few other forms — if any at all — can claim such a long-lasting, significant, and beautiful legacy.

Figure 5.13. “Nihonbashi Kara,” visualized. The instrumentation could vary.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

Longevity of the Cuban Contradanza

Countries all around the Caribbean adopted the contradanza form, embedding it into their own cultures, making changes that would come to symbolize their own cultural integrity and individuality. From the contradanza came the Cuban son, and an entire complex that provided a unifying symbol within Cuba and all around the Caribbean. Son allowed for many other genres to be birthed, creating structures or future forms like jazz. Salsa also emerged from the roots of son. The contradanza provides links between a host of other forms as well, extending deep into the music of the early twentieth century, particularly in the United States. Ragtime and jazz hold roots in the contradanza complex, as the rhythm forged in Cuba seeped into American writings, forever leaving an imprint which diffused throughout the North American continent. From a small rhythmic idea bloomed a wide-reaching, international legacy. The habanera/tango rhythm settled into the musical traditions of a host of nations, from Cuba and her neighbors all the way to the famous Argentinian tango in South America. Spain accepted it into its musical trajectory; western European composers used the rhythm in their works as well, from Saint-Saëns to Debussy. This exceptional diffusion and diversity of a single rhythmic cell could make the habanera the most powerful rhythm of all time. It formed the basis of the contradanza, but went much further than simply that. It impacted almost all musical genres and iterations in the

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nineteenth and even into the twentieth centuries, in solo instrumental works and in large-scale ensemble performances. It created a vibrant dance culture and birthed vocal songs, influenced the rich and poor alike, and pierced racial and ethnic barriers worldwide. Yet despite this wonderful tradition and international reach, it is not a stretch to suggest that a majority of musicians likely will never have heard of Manuel Saumell or Ignacio Cervantes. Indeed, many musical works by composers not born on the European continent are often ignored or simply under-explored in favor of traditional European composers. However, there is great value in uplifting music from diverse composers such as Saumell and Cervantes (and their influences). Diversifying the piano repertoire is vital; the contradanzas (and danzas) of Saumell and Cervantes are the perfect example of how even short works like theirs can have positive impacts on both the performers and the listeners.

The Importance of Diversity in Repertoire

A study published in 2009 by the International Journal of Music Education observed that undergraduate college students spend 93 percent of their time studying music from the Western European art tradition. Educators also tend to spend more time on the music which they themselves studied, which is also disproportionately centered on Anglo-Western art music. However, students are far more diverse today than they have ever been, and it is more than sensible to conclude that these new students benefit greatly from seeing themselves represented in the curriculum with which they interact. Indeed, core piano repertoire and composers are generally homogenous: being primarily white, male, and European. However, students can

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benefit greatly by being exposed to works by composers with whom they relate in areas of race, gender, and lived experience. Teachers must be prepared to teach music from a diversity of composers, in particular those which fall outside the established Eurocentric frame. The inclusion of piano works from composers outside this frame is critical. The lives of Saumell and Cervantes present perfect opportunities for just this type of student relation. Saumell, despite his extremely modest upbringing and his intense life struggles, was able to forge a magnificent musical culture, compose a series of dances which fundamentally altered the musical trajectory of his island, and expand a Cuban tradition to heights unseen. Cervantes, whose family was more well off, shirked the opportunity to tour and become famous, choosing instead to return to his home and further the musical identity generated by his predecessors. Cervantes took his danzas further than anyone ever had, even traveling abroad on behalf of his country. In the lives of the two composers, both born in the Western hemisphere, are several points of relation with which modern students can connect. And, of course, their music is accessible and thoroughly pleasant. Cervantes himself would dub his danzas “musical smiles” — and their elegance and simplicity bear this out most assuredly.

The prioritization of musical diversity should not only be considered as forcing massive institutional changes on music students, nor should music teachers feel the need to make huge, structural changes all at once. Instead, diversity should be indexed to increasing musical and repertoire variety. Any attempts at diversification of the repertoire should be purposed to offer a

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66 Peter Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 85. Cervantes belittled his danzas in this somewhat derisive way, but it would be these danzas that would mark him forever as a Cuban icon.
this variety, extending also to the voices elevated. The inclusion of repertoire from a wide array of sources, both in instruction and performance, will change the field of music performance. The end goal of repertoire diversification should always be to create and encourage inclusion and variety, which inevitably will lead to a more beautiful musical experience.67

The Cuban contradanza blossomed and grew largely due to the input of Manuel Saumell and Ignacio Cervantes. Their love of their island and innate musical talent lifted the contradanza and allowed for its international diaspora. They drew from their island’s history and growing nationalism to create a form which would come to symbolize a new Cuba. The influence of the contradanza would find life all around the Caribbean, from Puerto Rico and Haiti to Belize and the United States. Manuel Saumell, who desperately sought to break free from his lowly social status, would influence composers decades after his life. Cervantes would take Saumell’s frame and expand greatly upon it. Through creolization and creativity, through beautiful composing and elegant performances, the Cuban contradanza still lives.

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APPENDIX 1
List of Manuel Saumell’s 51 Contradanzas

1. La linda
2. El bazar
3. El disimulo
4. La elegante
5. La Territorial
6. Los ojos de Pepa
7. El pañuelo de Pepa
8. Ayes del alma
9. La Tedezco
10. L’Amitié
11. Luisiana
12. La virtuosa
13. La celestina
14. La gassier
15. Dice que no
16. La Josefina
17. La irenita
18. ¡Toma, Tomás!
19. El Somatén
20. La quejosita
21. La asesora
22. La pendencia
23. El cataclismo
24. La nené
25. ¿Pero por qué?
26. Tu sonrisa
27. Las quejas
28. Recuerdos tristes
29. La suavecita
30. Sopla, que quema
31. Los chismes de Guanabacoa
32. La dengosa
33. La Fénix
34. Saludo de Cuba
35. La paila
36. La cuegla
37. Lamentos de amor
38. La siempreviva
39. La niña bonita
40. La gota de agua
41. La veleta
42. La caridad
43. La Matilde
44. Las bodas
45. La piñata habanera
46. La Maria
47. El último golpe
48. El huracán
49. El jigote de Trinita
50. La luz
51. Recuerdos de Gottschalk

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APPENDIX 2
List of Ignacio Cervantes’s 40 Danzas

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<td>1.</td>
<td>Soledad</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>No me toques</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Un recuerdo</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>La celosa</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Almendares</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>El velorio</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>La glorieta</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>La en Canterbury</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Mensaje</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Duchas frías</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Zigs-zags</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Amistad</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>No bailes más!</td>
</tr>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Cri-crí</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Improvisada</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Picotazos</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Decisión</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>Pst!</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>Tiene que ser</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Adios a Cuba</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Vuelta al hogar</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>Ilusiones perdidas</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>Los tres golpes</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>Siempre sí</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>Se fue y no vuelve más</td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Homenaje</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>Gran Señora</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>Amén!</td>
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<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>No llores más</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Por qué, eh?</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>Interrumpida</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>Invitación</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>Lejos de tí!</td>
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<td>34.</td>
<td>Te quiero tanto!</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>La carcajada</td>
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<td>36.</td>
<td>Cortesana</td>
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<td>37.</td>
<td>Intima</td>
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<td>38.</td>
<td>La camagüeyana</td>
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<td>39.</td>
<td>Los delirios de Rosita</td>
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<td>40.</td>
<td>Los muñecos</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 3

List of Ernesto Lecuona’s Danzas, in three volumes

*Danzas Cubanas* (1929)

No hables más!
No puedo contigo
Ahí viene el chino
¿Por qué te vas?
Lola está de fiesta
En tres por cuatro

*Danzas Afro-Cubanas* (1930)

La Conga de media noche
   Danza negra
   …y la negra bailaba!
Danza de los ñañigos
   Danza Lucumi
   La comparsa

*Nineteenth Century Cuban Danzas* (1945)

La primera en la frente
   A la Antigua
   Impromptu
   Interrumpida
   La mulata
   Arabesque
   Ella y yo
   La cardenense
   Al fin te vi
   Minstrels