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Foreword

This edition of the *WASBE Journal* marks its twentieth year of publication. I would like to acknowledge the editors of the early editions of the *WASBE Journal*: Jon C. Mitchell, Leon Bly, Wolfgang Suppan, Raoul F. Camus, Berhard Habla, and David Whitwell. Without their pioneering work, the *Journal* would not exist today.

Since the publication of Volume 12 in 2005, the *Journal* has included peer-reviewed articles in addition to those that are submitted for editorial review. This volume includes only one peer-reviewed article, "*The Red Violin Chaconne* by John Corigliano: A Transcription for Wind Ensemble" by Benjamin Lorenzo.

Christopher Hughes' article on bands in Southeast Asia seems particularly appropriate for inclusion in the *WASBE Journal*. This edition also includes overviews of two composers, Michael Markowski and Benjamin Gutierrez. Especially in the United States, there is a growing body of literature on bands viewed in a social context. Mark P. Skaba's article explores one such avenue.

I have written two biographies about two of the important figures in the founding of WASBE. Frank L. Battisti was the President of the College Band Directors National Conference (CBDNA) from 1979-1981. Probably his most significant contribution as CBDNA President was his organization of the International Conference for Symphonic Bands and Wind Ensembles for Conductors, Composers, and Publishers that directly led to the formation of WASBE. H. Robert Reynolds was a central figure in CBDNA during and after this time; Reynolds served as President of CBDNA from 1983-1985. Both of these gentlemen made enormous contributions to the development of the contemporary wind ensemble. I am deeply grateful to both; they were exceedingly generous with their time and energies.

Authors from all areas of expertise are encouraged to submit articles for consideration to be published in the *Journal* (see Guidelines for Contributors), peer-reviewed or not. The community of wind band scholars and conductors will all benefit from a well-considered body of research from a wide variety of perspectives. Our ever-developing field will not continue to broaden without considered research and discussion.

William Berz
New Brunswick, New Jersey
November 2013

The Clarinet Concerto by Costa Rican Composer Benjamín Gutiérrez

Serving as official composer of the National System of Concert Bands of Costa Rica since 1969, Benjamín Gutiérrez, born in 1937, is one of the most respected composers for symphonic bands in Latin America. Among his wide repertory, his *Concerto for Clarinet* figures as the first solo work for this instrument ever written in Costa Rica, and reveals how a composer raised in a country that at the time did not offer highly academic studies for young talented musicians had to search for better opportunities to study music from outside of his homeland. Gutiérrez's main musical studies were completed in Guatemala, Argentina, and the United States, and his primary teachers include Francis Cooke (1910-1995), Ross Lee Finney (1906-1997), Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983), and Darius Milhaud (1892-1974). His music has been widely performed throughout America, Asia, and Europe, and he has been awarded numerous prizes including the *Juegos Florales Prize* in Guatemala (1966), the *Premio Aquileo J. Echeverría* (1962 and 1963), *Premio Nacional de Música* (1973, 1977, 1980 and 1985) and *Premio Magón* (2001) in Costa Rica. Other awards include the *Premio Ancora de La Nación* in 1983, the *National Theater of Costa Rica Chamber Music Prize* (1978), and in 1999 he was named "Musician of the Century" by the Costa Rican newspaper *La Nación*.

Benjamín Gutiérrez was initially trained as a pianist, and during his studies in Guatemala, he received basic instruction on playing the viola. Prior to this, he had a brief experience with the clarinet, which motivated him to write for the instrument. He said:

During my studies in Guatemala, I was required to take some lessons on a complimentary instrument; so I enrolled in clarinet lessons. I was just trying to blow on the mouthpiece when my professor, Auguste Ardenoir, suggested that I learn the viola, because as a composer it would be more functional for me to know about string instrument technique. I tried the clarinet but I couldn't play it. That's the reason for my admiration for this instrument.¹

After his studies at the National Conservatory of Music in Guatemala, Gutiérrez returned to Costa Rica in 1957 for the premiere of his first opera, *Marianela*, in October of that year. The success of this performance resulted in him being awarded a scholarship from the Institute of International Education, an organization hosted by the Embassy of the United States in Costa Rica. This allowed him to travel to the New England Conservatory in 1958 and pursue a master's degree in composition. Gutiérrez completed his first year of composition studies with Francis Judd Cooke and the second with Carl McKinley (1895-1966). Cooke encouraged him to move away from tonality and explore dodecaphonic sonorities because, according to the composer, "it was in vogue in America during those years."² The next year, Gutiérrez changed teachers to study with McKinley. He related that this instructor emphasized the study of counterpoint and was more permissive about his writing in a Neo-Romantic style. As a result of his years in Boston, Gutiérrez wrote three major works: the *Clarinet Sonata*, the *Wind Quintet*, and the *Clarinet Concerto*.

In 1959 Gutiérrez met Donna Klimowski, a vocalist and clarinetist at the New England Conservatory, who encouraged him to write a piece for her. As a result of this encounter, Gutiérrez wrote a *Concerto for Clarinet and Piano*, which he and Klimowski eventually performed during one of the composers' workshops at the conservatory. At this time Klimowski was learning Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto* K. 622, and this piece attracted the attention of Gutiérrez because of the color possibilities of the A clarinet, and also because the orchestra score did not include clarinets in the instrumentation.³ In 1960, the Sigma Alpha Iota chapter at the New England Conservatory organized a composition contest. Gutiérrez applied with an orchestration of his concerto and won an honorable mention that included a performance of the concerto with the Manhattan Orchestra in New York.

The world premiere was given on May 7, 1960 in the Hubbard Auditorium of the Manhattan School of Music, with Sherman Friedland as the clarinet soloist and under the baton of Nicholas Flagello (1928-1994). The concert also featured works by other composers from the Hartt College of Music, the New England Conservatory, and the Manhattan, Eastman and Juilliard Schools of Music that were premiered in the "Forum Concerts," a concert series organized by these schools of music. The other students were pupils of recognized teachers and composers at that time, including Howard Hanson, Vincent Persichetti, and Vittorio Giannini.⁴

The Costa Rican premiere of the piece was in 1961 with clarinetist Epifanio Sánchez and the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica, conducted by Hugo Mariani. Upon his return to the country, and as part of his service as Official Composer of the National Concert Bands System of Costa Rica, Gutiérrez adapted his concerto for full symphonic band in 1978. In the words of the composer, "there were more possibilities to make a performance of the work with bands because of the lack of availability of orchestras in the country."⁵ This version was first performed in the same year by clarinetist Rodrigo Jiménez as a soloist with the National Symphonic Band of San José, conducted by Luis Alberto Solano. In the band arrangement, the original key and the use of the A clarinet as a solo instrument remained, and the three movements were transcribed as they appeared in the orchestral score. Gutiérrez assigned the string parts to the clarinets; however, he considered that this version was too complex because the resulting key signature (C-sharp minor) was not comfortable for the instruments of a symphonic band. The composer himself wrote an updated revision of the piece in 2011, using the B-flat clarinet for the solo part, instead of the original in A.

This clarinet concerto is structured in three movements. The first movement, *Allegro con fuoco*, contrasts fast scales with long expressive phrases. It begins with a long tutti introduction, as was common with Classical and Romantic concertos. Contrasting dynamics, tempo indications, and meter changes are often used by Gutiérrez to elongate the melodic lines and highlight the Neo-Romantic character throughout the movement.

The second movement of the work features the use of dodecaphonic sonorities and reflects the admiration of Gutiérrez for Alban Berg's approach to writing twelve-tone music that was oriented in a lyrical way. He stated:

I told Professor Cook that I did not like the result of the combination of the dodecaphonic sounds since my ear was trained to the common practice

sonorities. However, he encouraged me to take Alban Berg as an example because, although he was part of the Second School of Vienna, his dodecapronic compositions were successful due to his melodic inventive; so this meant that his music was more appreciated by audiences. I followed his advice in the concerto, and in gratitude I dedicated the second movement of this piece to him.⁶

Although the composer consciously used all twelve pitches in this movement, his concern with consonant sonorities justified his preference for the third, fourth, and fifth intervals as melodic and harmonic resources. Gutiérrez assimilated the use of the twelve-tone scale, but he always shaped the lines with the use of chromaticism as a resource for expressiveness.

In the last movement, Gutiérrez borrowed melodies from the first movement of the *Concerto for two violins* (BWV 1043) by Johann Sebastian Bach and used them as elements in the solo part and in the accompaniment. Although drawing inspiration from Bach by using motives, Gutiérrez did not incorporate them with complex contrapuntal elaborations. This fragment taken from Bach's piece portrays the vivid, joyful character that was typical of final movements of Classical and Romantic concertos. The composer explained that he wanted to make tribute to Bach's music, but in a discrete way. For this reason, he chose the key of C sharp minor instead of the D minor in which Bach originally wrote and changed the direction of the sixth and seventh notes.⁷

For the solo performer, the piece offers several technical challenges. Intrepid virtuosic sections are written in all registers of the instrument, which are especially challenging because of the unusual interval combinations in the left hand and the throat register. Fast articulation in the lower register appears in the cadenza of the third movement, and articulating the broadening intervals requires a defined control of the embouchure. Moreover, an even breath support is necessary to connect passages between register changes and while slurring the large intervals.

Benjamín Gutiérrez's career has been recognized throughout Latin America because of the variety of styles and genres of his compositions. His compositional language includes a combination of different Ibero-American styles with the formal organization, pitch simultaneities, and melodic development of late 19th and early 20th century music. His approach to writing the *Concerto for Clarinet* transformed his music from a completely Romantic style of composition to include elements of the dodecapnicism that were in vogue in the United States during the 1950s. Those influences are evident in his most representative works for symphonic band: *Danza de la Pena Negra*, *Los Alcméonidas Overture*, *Homenaje a Juan Santamaría*, *Divertimento for Flute and Winds*, *Concerto for Violin and Band*, *Fantasia Popular*, and *Variaciones Rachmaninov-Paganini for Piano and Wind Band*.

Finally, this concerto inspired the writing of future compositions for the clarinet in Costa Rica. Since this piece was one of the earliest examples of academic music written for the clarinet in the country, its effect on future generations helped to establish the clarinet not only as a solo instrument with symphonic bands or orchestras, but also one that could be used with any other instrument combination for ensembles or chamber repertoire.

The manuscripts of the full score, band and orchestral parts, and piano reduction currently reside in the Music History Archive at the University of Costa Rica, series AHM. 0984.

Contact: archivohistorico.eam@ucr.ac.cr

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Luis Víquez is from Cartago, Costa Rica. He is currently pursuing a double M.A. degree in clarinet performance and wind conducting from Truman State University (Kirksville, MO), where he is a graduate teaching assistant. Before coming to the United States, he was the principal clarinetist of the Heredia Symphony Orchestra and was member of the faculty of the Paraíso School of Music. He was also the conductor of the Paraíso Youth Symphonic Band, winner of the National Band Competition of Costa Rica in 2011 and 2012. Mr. Víquez was principal clarinetist of the Municipal Orchestra of Cartago and a member of the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica in 2007. He has performed and conducted throughout Costa Rica and also in Panama, Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, and the United States, and was a member of the Latin American Youth Wind Orchestra (2009, Colombia) and the International Youth Wind Orchestra in Taiwan, 2011. Recently, he appeared as guest clarinet soloist for the 2012 Season of the Heredia Symphony Orchestra, performing Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto*. He was selected as the winner of the 2012 MMTA Collegiate Woodwinds Competition in the graduate division, and appeared as guest conductor of the Truman Clarinet Choir at the 2012 Vandoren/ Buffet Clarinet Ensemble Festival at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Mr. Víquez holds the Bachelor and Licenciatura degrees (Cum Laude) from the University of Costa Rica.

Endnotes

- ¹ Benjamín Gutiérrez, Interview with the author (August 10, 2012), University of Costa Rica.
- ² Ibid.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ "Young Composers Hear Their Music: Works Written by Students at Five Schools Played at 'Forum' Concerts." *The New York Times* (May 7, 1960).
- ⁵ Gutiérrez, Interview.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Ibid.