



The Solo and Chamber Saxophone Music of Aldemaro Romero

Valencia Hernandez, Esneider

https://scholarship.miami.edudiscovery/delivery/01UOML_INST:ResearchRepository/12355311600002976?l#13355503800002976

Valencia Hernandez, E. (2013). The Solo and Chamber Saxophone Music of Aldemaro Romero [University of Miami].
https://scholarship.miami.edu/discovery/fulldisplay/alma991031447445502976/01UOML_INST:ResearchRepository

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

THE SOLO AND CHAMBER SAXOPHONE MUSIC OF ALDEMARO ROMERO

By

Esneider Valencia Hernández

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Coral Gables, Florida

May 2013

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

A doctoral essay submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

THE SOLO AND CHAMBER SAXOPHONE MUSIC OF ALDEMARO ROMERO

Esneider Valencia Hernández

Approved:

Deborah Schwartz-Kates, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Chair
of Musicology Department

M. Brian Blake, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

Dale W. Underwood
Lecturer of Saxophone

Luciano Magnanini, P.D.
Professor of Bassoon

Santiago Rodriguez, M.M.
Professor and Chair of
Keyboard Department

VALENCIA HERNANDEZ, ESNEIDER
The Solo and Chamber Saxophone Music
of Aldemaro Romero.

(D.M.A., Instrumental Performance)
(May 2013)

Abstract of a doctoral essay at the University of Miami.

Doctoral essay supervised by Dr. Deborah Schwartz-Kates.
No. of pages in text. (78)

Aldemaro Romero Zerpa (1928-2007) stands as a major Venezuelan composer of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. His classical repertoire numbers over 100 published works. Many of these pieces are large-scale compositions that re-elaborate material from popular sources, producing music that is deeply rooted in the vernacular traditions of Venezuela and that is represented within a universal context. Romero's works for saxophone form an important part of his instrumental output. His repertoire for the instrument consists of ten compositions that include both orchestral and chamber music. This doctoral essay examines six of Romero's solo and chamber saxophone works, writing a descriptive entry about each piece and summarizing the general characteristics of the composer's output for the instrument as well as Romero's use of the *joropo* into his compositions for saxophone. In addition to these six works, I also provide a detailed musical analysis of *Saxomanía* (2002) for saxophone quartet and orchestra. Through this analysis, I highlight Romero's use of conventional classical forms, along with his thematic structures and native Venezuelan rhythmic and harmonic features. Focusing on the hybridization process inherent in this music, I demonstrate how Romero successfully mixes classical forms with local features from Venezuela.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a number of people to whom I would like to express my gratitude for the completion of this doctoral essay. I would like to give thanks to the Romero family, especially Ruby Romero, Elizabeth-Rossi de Romero, and Aldemaro Romero Jr. for facilitating my access to the composer's works and for allowing me to include the musical examples cited in this paper. I would like to thank my committee members, beginning with Deborah Schwartz-Kates, to whom I am grateful for her guidance, patience, and honest criticism, all of which helped me to become in a better writer and thinker. I am also grateful to Santiago Rodríguez and Luciano Magnanini for their support throughout my doctoral recitals. And finally, I am greatly indebted to a key person throughout this process, my saxophone teacher Dale Underwood, to whom I am incredibly thankful for believing in my capabilities and guiding me throughout my master's and doctoral degrees. I am grateful to Nancy Zava and William Walker for offering me the great opportunity to process the Aldemaro Romero Collection at the University of Miami—an opportunity that eventually led to the genesis of this paper. Finally, I would like to extend deep gratitude toward my beloved wife, María Julia, and to my family who supported me unconditionally through the long years of this degree.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES	vi
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	ix
Chapter	
INTRODUCTION	1
Justification and Literature Review	3
Sources and Materials	6
Methodology and Organization	8
I. ALDEMARO ROMERO: HIS LIFE AND WORKS FOR SAXOPHONE	11
II. THE <i>JOROPO</i> IN ROMERO’S MUSIC FOR SAXOPHONE	21
<i>Joropo</i> : History, Development, and Characteristic Features	21
The <i>Joropo</i> in Romero’s Music	27
III. ROMERO’S WORKS FOR SAXOPHONE	35
Works for Saxophone and Orchestra	37
Works for Saxophone Ensemble	42
IV. ANALYSIS OF <i>SAXOMANIA</i> FOR SAXOPHONE QUARTET AND SYMPHONIC ORCHESTRA	48
Musical Influences in <i>Saxomanía</i>	48
Musical Analysis	51
Movement I	52

Movement II	58
Movement III	61
CONCLUSIONS	70
BIBLIOGRAPHY	76

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

	Page
 EXAMPLES	
2.1a-b. The Metric Duality of the <i>joropo</i> in 3/4 and 6/8 time	25
2.2a-b. <i>Joropo</i> Rhythmic Scheme of <i>a tiempo</i> and <i>a contratiempo</i>	26
2.3a-c. Rhythmic Schemes of <i>a tiempo</i> and <i>a contratiempo</i> in the <i>cuatro</i>	27
2.4. Harmonic Sequence and Bass Pattern, <i>Preludio y quirpa</i> , mm. 57- 69.....	29
2.5. Subject, <i>Fuga con pajarillo</i> , mm. 1-8.....	30
2.6. <i>Fuga con pajarillo</i> (arr. saxophone ensemble, 2005), mm. 481-497	31
3.1a. Concerto for Paquito, mm. 45-52, cello and bass	38
3.1b. Concerto for Paquito, mm. 22-26, brass section, salsa groove	39
3.1c. Concerto for Paquito, mm. 99-102, <i>bossa nova</i> rhythm, bass	39
3.2. Concerto for Paquito, II, motive 1, mm. 3-7, clarinet.....	40
3.3. Concerto for Paquito, II, motive 2, mm. 53-56, clarinet.....	40
4.1a. <i>Merengue</i> in 5/8 meter	49
4.1b. <i>Merengue</i> in 2/4 meter	49
4.1c. <i>Merengue</i> in 6/8 meter	49
4.2. <i>Merengón</i> , m. 1, oboe	51
4.3. <i>Saxomanía</i> , I, Motive 1 (M1), mm. 1-2	52
4.4. <i>Saxomanía</i> , I, Motive 2 (M2), mm. 1-2	53
4.5. <i>Saxomanía</i> , I, Theme 1 (P1), mm. 21-28	54

4.6a. <i>Saxomanía</i> , I, Transition Theme 1 (T1), soprano saxophone, mm. 64-65....	55
4.6b. <i>Saxomanía</i> , I, Transition Theme 2 (T2), flute, mm. 73-74.....	55
4.7. <i>Saxomanía</i> , I, Theme 2 (S1) violin I, II, mm. 89-96.....	56
4.8a. <i>Saxomanía</i> , II, Section A, Motive 1, mm. 27-28, soprano saxophone.....	59
4.8b. <i>Saxomanía</i> , II, Section A, Motive 2, mm. 39-40, soprano saxophone	59
4.9a. <i>Saxomanía</i> , II, Section B, Motive 1, mm. 57-58, soprano saxophone.....	60
4.9b. <i>Saxomanía</i> , II, Section B, Motive 1, mm. 71-72, soprano saxophone.....	60
4.10. <i>Saxomanía</i> , II, Section C, Motive 1, m. 103, French horn I.....	61
4.11. <i>Saxomanía</i> , III, Ostinato 1, m. 9, cello and viola.....	62
4.12. <i>Saxomanía</i> , III, Harmonic Progression, O1, mm. 9-48	63
4.13. <i>Saxomanía</i> , III, Theme 1, mm. 17-24, violin I	63
4.14. <i>Saxomanía</i> , III, Final theme, Transition, mm. 69-72, oboe and trumpet.....	65
4.15. <i>Saxomanía</i> , III, Ostinato 2, mm. 73-74.....	66
4.16. <i>Saxomanía</i> , III, Harmonic Progression, O2, mm.73-108	67
4.17. <i>Saxomanía</i> , III, Saxophone Section Accompaniment, mm.73-108	67

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
4.1. <i>Saxomanía</i> , Movement I— Introduction and Exposition—Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes, mm. 1-108	57
4.2. <i>Saxomanía</i> , Movement I— Development—Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes, mm. 109-176.....	58
4.3. <i>Saxomanía</i> , Movement I—Recapitulation and Coda— Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes, mm. 177-20	58
4.4. <i>Saxomanía</i> , Movement II—Intro, A-B-C and Coda— Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes, mm. 1-124	61
4.5 <i>Saxomanía</i> , Movement III— Introduction and O1 —Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes, mm. 1-56.....	68
4.6. <i>Saxomanía</i> , Movement III— Transition—Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes, mm. 57-72.....	68
4.7. <i>Saxomanía</i> , Movement III— O2—Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes, mm. 73-108	69
4.8. <i>Saxomanía</i> , Movement III—Coda—Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes mm. 109-118.....	69

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

as.	alto sax
bar.	baritone sax
bc cl.	bass clarinet
bn.	bassoon
bs trbn.	bass trombone
bsx.	bass saxophone
cl.	clarinet
cym.	cymbals
db.	double bass
dbn.	double bassoon
eng hn.	English horn
fl.	flute
glock.	glockenspiel
hn.	French horn
hp.	harp
ob.	oboe
pcc.	piccolo
pf.	piano
sn-d.	snare drum
ss.	soprano sax
sss.	sopranino sax

tpt.	.....	trumpet
trbn.	.....	trombone
ts.	.....	tenor sax
va.	.....	viola
vc.	.....	violoncello

Introduction

Aldemaro Romero Zerpa (1928-2007) stands as a major Venezuelan composer of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. His classical repertoire numbers over 100 published works. Many of these pieces are large-scale compositions that re-elaborate material from popular sources, producing music that is deeply rooted in the vernacular traditions of Venezuela and that is represented within a universal context. Romero's compositional output includes twenty-five concertos for such diverse instruments as flute, oboe, clarinet, violin, viola, cello, bass, piano, trumpet, trombone, saxophone, harp, *bandoneón*, harmonica, and spinet. Romero dedicated some of these works to important figures in the world of Latin American music, such as Arturo Sandoval, to whom he dedicated the *Concierto cubano* for trumpet, flugelhorn, and orchestra (1999-2000)¹; Julio Toro, for whom he composed the *Concierto para flauta y orquesta* (2000)²; and Paquito D'Rivera, for whom he created the *Concerto for Paquito* (1999).³ After the concerto, chamber music dominates Romero's compositional output. This body of work

¹ Arturo Sandoval with the Santa Barbara Symphony Orchestra premiered this work in Santa Barbara, California on 23 February 2002.

² Luis Julio Toro with the Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho Symphonic Orchestra premiered this work in Caracas on 25 November 2000.

³ Gregory Parra with the Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho Symphonic Orchestra premiered this work in Caracas (date unknown).

involves instrumental combinations such as string quartet, *bandoneón*⁴ with string ensemble, saxophone quartet, and flute and guitar duo. Vocal works, such as cantatas, oratorios, and pieces for soloist, chorus, and orchestra, abound in Romero's compositional output. They include the *Oratorio a Bolívar* (1971), which the Venezuelan government commissioned to celebrate the sesquicentenary of the *Batalla de Carabobo* (Carabobo Battle)—an event that led to the 1821 Venezuelan Declaration of Independence.

The composer is also known for his popular music, which likewise presents a unique fusion of Venezuelan and international elements. Romero's creation of the Venezuelan *onda nueva* (new wave) movement marked one of the high points of his career. This movement was inspired by Brazilian *bossa nova* musicians such as João Gilberto, Agostinho dos Santos, and Carmen Acosta. Like many of these popular figures, Romero brought national song lyrics and rhythms together with melodies and harmonies identified with international jazz. The recognition that Romero received for this creative fusion recalls the achievement of the celebrated Argentinean *nuevo tango* composer, Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992), whose works reveal a similar stylistic synthesis.

Romero's works for saxophone form an important part of his instrumental output. This repertoire consists of ten compositions that include both orchestral and chamber music.⁵ These works are divided into four categories: 1) compositions for saxophone and orchestra, 2) pieces for string orchestra and small wind ensemble, 3) works for saxophone

⁴ The *bandoneón* is an Argentinian accordion-like instrument that is used in the performance of the tango. Instead of a keyboard, it has 38 buttons in the upper-middle registers and 33 buttons in the lower register.

⁵ In eight of these ten works, the saxophone plays a principal role as a soloist or in an ensemble capacity (e.g., a quartet). In the two remaining works, the saxophone appears within a small wind ensemble incorporated into the orchestra but otherwise lacks the characteristics of a soloist.

quartet, and 4) music for large saxophone ensemble. Romero composed all but one of these pieces over a span of ten years (1997-2007), and only recently has some of this music been published.⁶

Justification and Literature Review

Despite Romero's exceptional achievement, little scholarly research about his artistic contribution exists. Currently, there are only two full-length studies of the composer. The first, *Aldemaro Romero (1928-2007)* by Federico Pacanins,⁷ presents a detailed biography of the composer. It describes Romero's origins and musical environment from his childhood years in Venezuela through his professional development as a composer, arranger, and performer in the United States and Europe. This book does not present any relevant information about Romero's works for the saxophone; however, it is an essential source of information about his music in general. The second book is titled, *La música de Carabobo—apuntes*⁸ by Aldemaro Romero. In this text, the composer recounts the history of the music and musicians in the state of Carabobo, his natal region and a site with an important impact on Venezuelan music. This book covers approximately 100 years; it begins with the music of Carabobo during the last two decades of the nineteenth century and ends in the 1970s with Romero's

⁶ The Italian publisher *Pagani s.r.l. Edizioni Musicali* owns Romero's copyrights, however the publication of his works has been assigned to three German subpublishers: 1) Antes Edition, 2) Tonos Musikverlags, and 3) Edition 49. So far, Romero's works for saxophone printed by Antes Edition are: *Concerto for Paquito* (2011), *Saxomania* (2011), and one unidentified and undated piece that appears on the publisher website under the title Saxophone Quartet. The pieces published by Tonos Musikverlags GmbH are two undated and unidentified compositions for saxophone quartet which also appear online with the title Saxophone Quartet. Edition 49 published the *Cuarteto latino americano para saxofones*.

⁷ Federico Pacanins, *Aldemaro Romero (1928-2007)* (Caracas: Editora El Nacional, 2009).

⁸ Aldemaro Romero, *La música de Carabobo—apuntes* (Valencia, Venezuela: Consejo Legislativo del Estado de Carabobo, 2006).

creation of the urban version of the *joropo* known as *onda nueva*. These two biographical studies are in Spanish and therefore are not accessible to English-speaking readers. The present essay therefore aims to provide a scholarly source to the non-Spanish speaking world that sheds light on Romero's creative achievement, in addition to providing a cultural background and analytical insight into his saxophone literature.

Outside of these two books, few secondary sources include treatment of Aldemaro Romero's life and works. The *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana*⁹ presents an article on the composer by Rafael Salazar. It devotes one-and-a-half columns to Romero and constitutes one of the most comprehensive sources of information on the composer for Spanish readers. Salazar presents a fair amount of detail about Romero's life and recounts some of the composer's writings as well as his most renowned pieces. In the list of his important compositions, the author includes a citation of the *Cuarteto latino americano para saxofones*, which is a central focus of the present paper. The *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Latin American and Caribbean Cultures* is the only scholarly source in the English language that provides information about Aldemaro Romero's life. In a short paragraph, this article highlights the composer's creation of the *onda nueva* style, along with his work as an arranger of groups such as the Stan Kenton Orchestra, London Symphony, and Tito Puente Orchestra. However, this brief entry for a musical encyclopedia does not mention any of Romero's compositions.

In general, the dissemination of saxophone literature has increased dramatically over the past four decades. Yet, despite this increase, neither international catalogues nor specialized listings of Latin American saxophone music provide detailed information

⁹ Rafael Salazar. "Romero Zepa Aldemaro" *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana*, ed. Emilio Casares Rodicio (Madrid: Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 1999), 396-97.

about Romero's works for the instrument. *A Comprehensive Guide to the Saxophone Repertoire*¹⁰ (2003) is the standard reference source on the subject. This four-volume comprehensive work by Jean-Marie Londeix is used worldwide. It consists of a list of 18,000 published works for saxophone by composers all over the world and includes brief description of the works. Londeix lists four of the ten Romero works for saxophone, but omits additional mention of the composer or his music. *El saxofón en la música docta de América Latina*¹¹ (2007) by the Cuban saxophonist Miguel Villafruela, is the first lengthy study of the Latin American repertoire for the instrument. This specialized work describes the history and development of the Latin American saxophone literature, along with its most important composers and performers during the 19th and 20th centuries. This study lists 1,080 works for saxophone and includes five of the seven compositions examined here. For each, Villafruela includes the date of composition, the instrumentation, the duration, and (in some cases) a discography. However, he offers no further discussion of the composer or his work..

Because little information about Romero's life and music is available for the non-English speaker and because the international saxophone community knows little about Romero's music for the instrument, my doctoral essay aims to fill an important scholarly lacuna that is not currently addressed by the existing literature.

¹⁰ Jean-Marie Londeix, "Romero Aldemaro," *A Comprehensive Guide to the Saxophone Repertoire, 1844-2003* (Cherry Hill, NJ.: Northeastern Music Pub Inc, 2003).

¹¹ Miguel Villafruela, *El saxofón en la música docta de América Latina: el rol de los saxofonistas y de las instituciones de enseñanza en la creación musical para el instrumento* (Santiago de Chile: Universidad de Chile, 2007).

Sources and Materials

A key element in the execution of this project is the ability to access Romero's original manuscripts. In October 2007, the University of Miami began the process of acquiring Aldemaro Romero's music and papers. A few months after the composer's death in September 2007, his son, Aldemaro Romero Jr., contacted the university. After several meetings that took place in Venezuela, the Romero family reached an agreement with the University of Miami Libraries. They sent the composer's music in three shipments to the United States, the first arriving in May 2009 and the last in September 2010. Currently, the Special Collections Division of the General Libraries houses approximately 95% of Romero's artistic output, which primarily takes the form of original music manuscripts. The Romero Collection includes 100 classical compositions—some of which remain unperformed—and 157 popular songs.

For the present study, the most relevant materials consist of Romero's scores of his saxophone compositions. They provide a reliable source of the composer's original notation, instrumentation, and commentary, along with firsthand insights into his compositional style. Along with the scores exists an inventory that includes the date and place of each composition, the dedication, the date and place of the premiere, and the name(s) of the performer(s) who premiered the work.

Other important sources of information are two books that form part of the Aldemaro Romero Collection. *Conversaciones con Aldemaro Romero*¹² is a brief volume divided into four encounters between the composer and his biographer, Federico

¹² Federico Pacanins, *Conversaciones con Aldemaro Romero* (Caracas: Fundación Para la Cultura Urbana, 2006).

Pacanins. In an informal style, these interviews address a wide variety of musical topics. This book offers an inside view of Romero's ideas about music and especially his dual approach to composing in popular and classical styles. A second volume, Romero's own monograph, *El joropo llanero y el joropo central*, provides an overview of the genre. It describes the origins of this musical form, along with its multiple variants, as well as offering information about its instrumentation, well-known performers, and evolution from a rural to an urban genre. Most importantly, it addresses Romero's development of the *joropo* into the *onda nueva* style. This book is an excellent source that sheds light on the composer's own understanding of *joropo* music, which he later elaborated in his compositions.

Finally, a more informal, but useful, source of information can be found in the four folders of newspaper clippings from the Romero collection. These materials span the years 1952-2010 and cover the composer's musical activities around the world. This information gives an account of the Venezuelan musician's career in Europe, Latin America, and the United States, as well as his work with important Latin American musical figures such as Alfredo Sadel, Pérez Prado, and Tito Puente. These folders also contain newspaper articles that the composer himself authored about musical life in Venezuela. Writings about Romero's compositions in popular magazines, such as *Billboard*, and classical publications, such as *Gramophone*, form part of this compilation as well. With an estimated 2,000 clippings covering 58 years, this part of the collection is a useful source of information about the perception of Romero's music by the mass media, not only in Venezuela or Latin America but throughout the world.

This rare opportunity to access primary sources has granted me a deeper understanding of Romero's compositional style. Using these documents allowed me to provide a comprehensive exposition of Romero's literature for the saxophone. Additionally, I have contacted the composer's wife, Elizabeth-Rossi de Romero, and his daughter, Ruby Romero, who have offered additional information about the Venezuelan musician in order to facilitate work on this project.

Methodology and Organization

This essay examines seven of Romero's solo and chamber saxophone works. It provides a descriptive entry for each and summarizes the general characteristics of the composer's output for the instrument. The study of these works will include biographical information about the pieces (their histories, dedications, and reviews of the premieres, if applicable), as well as encompassing treatment of their musical characteristics and instrumentation. Furthermore, a description of the Venezuelan *joropo* and related genres—particularly the *quirpa*, the *pajarillo*, and the *merengue caraqueño*—exposes critical elements that Romero used in these compositions.

The works studied in this paper include four pieces for saxophone quartet, one work for saxophone and orchestra, and one composition for saxophone, small wind ensemble, and string orchestra. The saxophone quartets are the *Cuarteto latinoamericano para saxofones* (1976), *Preludio y quirpa* (1997), *Fuga con pajarillo* (1999),¹³ and *Quirpa con variaciones* (2003). The piece for saxophone and orchestra is *Concerto for*

¹³ In the description of this piece, I will address the later version that Romero wrote for saxophone ensemble in 2005.

Paquito (1999), and the work for saxophone, small wind ensemble, and string orchestra is *Gurrufío en onda nueva* (2001).

In addition to these six works, I also provide a detailed musical analysis of *Saxomanía* (2002). I have singled out this work for special attention because I believe it is one of the pieces that best represents Romero's approach to the instrument. It also has a particular configuration —saxophone quartet and orchestra—that I consider attractive for performers, conductors, and audiences alike. Through this analysis, I highlight Romero's uses of conventional classical forms, along with his thematic structures, native Venezuelan rhythms, and vernacular harmonic features. Focusing on the hybridization process inherent in his music, I demonstrate how Romero successfully mixed classical forms with local Venezuelan features.

This study is limited to works in which the saxophone plays a principal role, leaving aside instances in which the instrument functions as a member of a larger musical combination. In compositions such as *Bienmesabes* (2001) and *Merengón* (2002), Romero used the saxophone as part of a small wind ensemble with percussion and string orchestra, featuring sporadic soloist interventions by the saxophone. Because these works do not focus specifically on the saxophone, they lie outside the scope of the present essay. Nonetheless, I hope that future studies will address this important aspect of Romero's creative production.

To address Romero's contribution successfully, this essay is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 addresses Romero's biography, placing his contribution into an historical perspective by presenting a brief sketch of his life and by portraying the most notable achievements of his career. The second chapter addresses Romero's use of the

joropo in his compositions for the saxophone. The third chapter provides an annotated description of seven of Romero's compositions for the instrument, and the fourth renders an analysis of *Saxomanía*. A conclusion summarizes the results of this study and places Romero's contribution to the saxophone literature in historical perspective.

Chapter I

Aldemaro Romero: His Life and Works for Saxophone

Aldemaro Romero was born in Valencia in the state of Carabobo, Venezuela, in 1928, the second of four children. His parents, Rafael Romero Osio and Luisa Zerpa de Romero, were both natives of Valencia. Romero received his first music lessons from his father, who worked as a music teacher, composer, arranger, and conductor at the Teatro Municipal and the Cine Mundial, a silent movie theater in the city. However, Romero never had any formal musical training beyond these first lessons with his father.

From his childhood memories, the composer recalls hearing a kaleidoscope of colorful sounds, which later formed the basis of his musical aesthetic. As he commented:

At home, we heard scales and exercises when music lessons were in progress. We enjoyed evocative songs, sonorous strums of the guitar, with which the maestro [my father] enlivened the final hours of the afternoon. We heard Gardel's tangos ... the majestic chords of the introduction to the waltz, "Caribe" by Maria Luisa Escobar, broadcast by La Voz de Carabobo].¹⁴

¹⁴ "Se oían en mi casa escalas y ejercicios cuando se impartían lecciones; se disfrutaba de evocadoras canciones, sonoros rasgueos de la guitarra con las que el maestro amenizaba las últimas horas de la tarde; se escuchaban tangos de Gardel ... los acordes majestuosos de la introducción del vals Caribe de Maria Luisa Escobar, contumazmente difundidos por la Voz de Carabobo." Aldemaro Romero, *La música de Carabobo: apuntes* (Valencia, Venezuela: Consejo Legislativo del Estado de Carabobo, 2006), 21-24.

This was Romero's musical ambiance at home. Nevertheless, the composer acknowledged the significance of another vast world of music in the environment that surrounded him:

Other pastoral sounds were music to my ears: ... the children's chorus at the Sittel [Elementary School] ... the mournful and spiteful chant of a fragile serenading guitarist singing the verses of the waltz, "Deja" [Leave It] by Lorenzo Herrera. and what seems to have been most dramatic for me—the musical discourse of the flautist Julio Martinez ... who had the power to convert me into his most loyal and enthusiastic listener. [In this way], my music education was of a broader nature. ... There was the maestro Luna's barbershop with its popular musicians, who did not hesitate to take up the *bandolín*, the *cuatro*, and the guitar ... I watched them, I heard them, and I learned from them. ... [There was also] the little church La Pastora, whose modest harmonium played along with the parishioners in their pious chants. ... This was my music school on Sundays. ... [Also, there was] the respectable and ancient music school of Don Sebastián Echeverría Lozano ... who composed "classical music" and where the voices and instruments of his students offered me a theater of multiple sounds.

After visiting all these music sources merely as an observer, the main places left were the stages where my father was the central figure: El Cine Mundial and the Teatro Municipal.¹⁵

¹⁵ "Otros sonidos pastoréenos eran música para mis oídos ... el coro infantil de los himnos escolares en la escolita de Sittel ... el canto tristón y despechado de un serenatero de cuerpo frágil y guitarra afligida entonando los versos del valse, "Deja" de Lorenzo Herrera. Y lo que me resultaba más dramático, el discurso de la flauta tercerola de Julio Martínez ... que tenía el poder de convertirme en su más fiel y entusiasta escucha ... mis escuelas fueron entonces de más amplia naturaleza ... estaba la barbería del maestro Luna, con sus músicos parroquianos, que no vacilaban en echar manos de del bandolín, el cuatro y la guitarra ... yo les miraba, les oía y les aprendía ... la iglesita de La Pastora, cuyo modesto armonio acompañaba los feligreses en sus cantos piadosos ... Era mi escuela musical de los domingos. ... la respetable y vetusta escuela de música de don Sebastián Echeverría Lozano ... que componía "música clásica" y que de las voces e instrumentos de sus estudiantes, me propiciaba un teatro de múltiples sonidos.

Después de frecuentar, apenas como observador, todas esas canteras musicales solo me restaba la experiencia de los escenarios donde mi padre era la figura central: el Cine Mundial y el Teatro Municipal." Ibid.

These experiences resonated throughout the life of the composer and influenced his compositional style.

By the middle 1930s, the young Romero had already begun his musical apprenticeship by playing his father's guitar. He gave his first public performance in a duo with his sister Rosalia on the radio program, "La Hora Infantil" (The Children's Hour) broadcast on the local radio station of Carabobo.

In 1942, mainly due to economic insecurities and his father's changing employment between the cities of Caracas and Valencia, the family moved permanently to Caracas. During this time, they received as a gift a musical instrument from his grandmother. The instrument, a pianola, was rapidly converted to a piano, through which the young Romero acquired his first knowledge of the instrument. His sister Luisa also helped him by giving him some rudimentary music lessons. Romero's father, fearful of the economic hardships that his son would face as a musician, tried to discourage him from a musical career and enrolled him in a technical-industrial school. However, this plan was unsuccessful since the young Romero had already made plans for his life as a musician.

During the next five years (1942-1948), the young Romero had contact with several amateur musicians in Caracas and started playing in night clubs; additionally, he took informal piano lessons with the important Venezuelan pianist and composer, Moisés Moleiro.¹⁶ From this period, comes the musician's first popular composition, the *bolero* "Me queda el consuelo," now considered a classic among Venezuelan love songs. In

¹⁶ Moisés Moleiro (1904-1979) was a Venezuelan pianist and composer. His compositions include songs, choral music, and piano works. One of his most famous works was the "Joropo" for piano.

1947, by the age of nineteen, Romero had already started working as a piano accompanist and as a composer with Alfonso Larrain's Orchestra, one of the most famous tropical bands in Venezuela. This experience offered a new array of musical knowledge from the hands of the arranger and composer, José Pérez Figuera and the pianists Jesús Sanoja and Aníbal Abreu. In Larrain's group, Romero witnessed the experiments of performing traditional Venezuelan music in the big band format, the seed of which he would eventually develop later.

After nine months working with Larrain's ensemble, Romero was called to conduct the Rafa-Victor Orchestra. In his new job, the composer worked as a musical arranger and conducted the saxophone section—an experience that gave him firsthand insights into the capabilities of the instrument. During this time, Romero wrote his first arrangement of popular songs for strings of the Venezuelan ensembles, Cuerdas de Playa and Ondas Populares, culminating in the recording of his *bolero* “No necesito de tí” (I Don't Need You) in his own arrangement. In 1949, the sum of all these experiences led Romero to start his own band. With this new project, his compositions and arrangements expressed an experimental sound— bitonal *mambos*, and *guarachas* with bebop interludes— music that seemed more suitable to listen to than to dance. This style did not achieve popularity among Latin American audiences, but it may have a better acceptance in a more cosmopolitan ambiance. This idea made Romero consider new paths for his career. Thus, in 1952, he traveled to New York to work as an arranger and piano accompanist for RCA Victor in the Latin Music Division, orchestrating and recording contemporary styles of music that were in high demand, particularly the *mambo*. The positive response of the audience in the musical capital of the world gave him a taste of

victory. His work was applauded in the Palladium—a mecca of the mambo during that time in New York—and his orchestra was acknowledged as the third in a contest of Latin artists in New York, losing only to the orchestras of Tito Rodríguez and Tito Puente.

In 1953, having already formed part of a select group of Latin American musicians working in New York City—a group that included Dámaso Pérez Prado, Chico O’Farril, Noro Morales, and Tito Puente—Romero began to work on a series that would become one of signature recordings. This successful orchestral series featured Latin American styles of salon music. The title of the series began with the words "Dinner in" and ended with the names of Latin American cities or countries, such as Caracas, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Havana, Colombia, and Mexico. Each of these recording drew upon the popular music of its respective region. The US newspaper, *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, reviewed Romero’s recording of “Dinner in Caracas” with the words:

A super-smooth set of music ... a gem of a set of real pieces from Venezuela and played by a lush salon orchestra by a native son, Aldemaro Romero. This is suave, sophisticated music, tastefully and impeccable played.¹⁷

The success of this recording generated expectations, particularly in Venezuela. Thus, between 1954 and 1956, Romero presented his orchestra several times on well-known stages in Caracas. Nonetheless, the reaction of audiences to his music was contradictory. On the one hand, the recordings were a commercial success. Yet, on the other hand, a group of Venezuelan academics and purists saw in this music the corruption of Venezuelan traditions, beginning with the title of the series. Furthermore, Romero was

¹⁷ Les Zacheis, “Record Reviews” *The Cedar Rapids Gazette*, June 12, 1955, [living section].

formally accused of unauthorized use of the copyrights in the recording of two of the tracks of the “Dinner in Venezuela” LP.¹⁸

In 1956, following the commercial success of this series, Romero returned to Caracas and got involved with television as well as with touring Latin America and the United States with his orchestra and the singer Alfredo Sadel. On television, Romero aimed to produce shows that contained as much Venezuelan music as foreign repertoire. In 1956, he signed a contract with the station RCTV (Radio Caracas Television), conducting the show “Teatro General Electric.” Afterward, in 1957, he became the Music Director of the channel Televisa, and started two new musical shows: “Conciertos Firestone” and “Teatro Televisado.” In 1961, he returned to RCTV to conduct “El Show de Aldemaro Romero.” In his final participation with the television networks, he conducted the show “Venezuela canta y baila” (Venezuela Sings and Dances) for CVTV Channel 8 between 1964 and 1968. During the late 1960s Romero was involved in many activities that included marketing, advertising, politics, and serving as the Administrative Secretary of SACVEN (Society of Author and Composers of Venezuela).

During the first years of the 1970s, Romero divided his time between the United States and Venezuela. In the United States, he sat in on various film scoring course at Los Angeles University.¹⁹ While in Caracas, Romero began to develop a new style of music that synthesized his taste for jazz and traditional Venezuelan music. He named this style

¹⁸ Between 1955 and 1957, Venezuelan newspapers such as *El Heraldo*, *Ultima Noticia*, and *El Nacional*, reported several lawsuits against the composer for the unauthorized recording of some songs in Romero’s LPs. Aldemaro Romero Collection, Special Collection Department, University of Miami, newspaper clipping box no. 23, 1952-1959.

¹⁹ Ruby Romero, telephone interview by the author, Miami, FL, February 2, 2013.

onda nueva. The first song he recorded in this style was “Aragüita,” a popular Venezuelan song. In this recording he used a jazz-like quartet instrumentation consisting of tenor saxophone, piano, bass, and drums. Later, the formation of his *onda nueva* ensemble came to include four singers piano, bass, and drums. The repertoire they recorded in the *onda nueva* style included Venezuelan classics with a new instrumentation and novel arrangements. The *onda nueva* style became an important commercial success. Furthermore, the style became so popular that Romero organized three international festivals (1971-73) dedicated to the genre which attracted musicians of the caliber of Astor Piazzolla, Milton Nascimento, Tito Puente, Dave Grusin, and Agostinho Dos Santos, among many other international artists. Romero’s idea was to internationalize Venezuelan music, taking the roots of the tradition into new musical territories. In Chapter II, I discuss the musical characteristics of the *onda nueva* style in greater depth.

In 1974-75, Aldemaro Romero and his family moved to Madrid and then to London. In these cities he recorded his original popular music in an orchestral format. In addition, while in London, he initiated a period of symphonic compositions. The circumstances that motivated him to begin writing in this style were unclear. However, there were important precedents in his works such as the “Dinner in” series, the film music for *La epopeya de Bolívar* (1968), and the *Suite andaluza* (1973). From this period, came vocal and instrumental works, such as the *Oratorio a Bolívar* (1976) performed by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the *Suite para cuerdas* (1976) premiered by the English Chamber Orchestra, and the *Cuarteto latinoamericano de saxofones* (1976)

premiered in Los Angeles. These creations forged new paths in Romero's career—paths that eventually would lead him back to Venezuela.

In 1977, during a visit to Caracas for the wedding of his daughter, Romero met the future president of Venezuela, Luis Herrera Campíns. Herrera Campíns offered him support for the creation of the Orquesta de Caracas—a project initially oriented toward the preservation of repertoire by Venezuelan composers. The creation of this orchestra took shape, and Romero returned to Caracas in December 1977. The orchestra played its first concert on 26 February 1978, with works by Antonio Vivaldi, Juan Bautista Plazas, and the composer's own *Suite para Cuerdas*. The program that night set the tone of this project. The orchestra would perform music not just by Venezuela composers, but also the classical symphonic repertoire. Thus, in September 1978, the Fundación Orquesta Filarmónica de Caracas was officially established with Romero as the titular conductor. The orchestra remained active until 1984, when political struggles between Romero and the government ended with the suspension of the financial support for the orchestra. These consequences led the ensemble to disband, which was a tough setback for the composer.

In 1985, Romero began a series of concerts with his friend Alfredo Sadel and the young Latin jazz singer, Maria Rivas. Along with these concerts, he started receiving frequent invitations from various orchestras to conduct his own works. These activities had a strong significance for him because they broke the paradigm of the division between popular and classical music that Romero had experienced in Venezuela since his childhood. The end of the 1980s brought the Venezulean musician back to the radio with his show, *Rueda Libre* (Free Wheel) of Radio Capital. He and his friend Manuel Graterol

commented in a humorous style on national news events of the day, and Romero accompanied guests who were interviewed at the piano. The show also had an important success on TV, which lasted until the middle 1990s. During that decade, Romero published two books on music, *Esta es una orquesta* (This is an Orchestra, 1992) and *Cosas de la música* (Musical Things, 1998). Romero wrote these essays in an informal style that aimed to give readers basic information about famous composers, musical terms, and the instruments of the orchestra.

After 1997, Romero began his most prolific period of classical composition, producing 80 works in a span of ten years. This production comprised orchestral music, concertos for a wide variety of instruments, symphonic poems, masses, oratorios, choral music, and chamber compositions. Nine of the ten pieces he wrote for saxophone came from this period. In 2000, Romero was awarded a Premio Nacional de la Cultura Venezolana (Venezuelan National Cultural Awards), a prize that recognizes musical production of great artistic value by Venezuelan composers.

In 2003, he recorded a CD with the acclaimed María Rivas, who had become closely identified performances of Romero's popular music. The recording they made, titled *Maria Rivas y Aldemaro Romero*, featured the composer's original music as well as jazz, boleros, and Brazilian pieces. His work with the singer started in 1988, when they performed for the first time as a duet in the Teatro Villalobos (Villalobos Theater) in Rio de Janeiro. In 2006, Romero received honorary doctorates from three Venezuelan universities: the Universidad de Carabobo, the Universidad Lisandro Alvarado, and the Universidad del Zulia. On March 2007, he conducted his last concert with the Orquesta Sinfónica Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho in a program that featured his own compositions.

Romero died in Caracas on 15 September, 2007 at the age of 79. His ashes were scattered in Como Lake in Italy, in accordance with composer's wishes.

Chapter II

The *Joropo* in Romero's Music for Saxophone

The inclusion of Venezuelan native musical elements plays an important role in Romero's compositions. The *joropo* is commonly regarded as a distinctive folk genre and the most characteristic cultural form of Venezuela. Romero himself considered the *joropo* so important that he authored a book titled, *El joropo llanero y el joropo central*²⁰—a text that was dedicated to the study of the genre and its performers in the western and central regions of Venezuela. Based on his thorough knowledge of this cultural form, Romero recreated traditional Venezuelan music in a new cosmopolitan context by blending local and international forms, styles, and instruments. In this chapter, I address key aspects of the *joropo*, including its origins and its harmonic and rhythmic structures. I then show how Romero assimilated these elements within his compositions for saxophone.

***Joropo*: History, Development, and Characteristic Features**

The *joropo* is the emblematic cultural expression of Venezuela and a tradition that the nation shares with a vast expanse of the Colombian *llanos orientales*. The term *joropo* derives from the Arabian word, *xorope*, which means syrup—something sweet. More than a genre identified by fixed characteristics, the *joropo* is made up of a

²⁰ Aldemaro Romero, *El joropo llanero y el joropo central* (Caracas: Sacven, 2004).

multiplicity of subgenres. Ethnomusicologists who specialize in the field agree with the thesis that *joropo* was a transformation of the Spanish *fandango*, mixed with elements native to the Venezuelan region.²¹ Throughout the 18th century, the term was applied in Venezuela to describe a family gathering where people danced and sang. In its traditional form, the *joropo* combines poetry, dance, and music, displaying a complex mixture of cultural features from different origins and epochs. This genre exhibits its purest form in rural areas.

The *joropo* can be sung or performed by instruments; in either case, the *arpa*, *cuatro*,²² and *maracas* are associated with the genre. In instrumental performance, it is common to add a *bandola llanera* to the ensemble.

In his book, *El joropo llanero y el joropo central*,²³ Romero presents an historical, musical, and organological analysis of the genre, together with a discussion of its historical development. He classifies the *joropo* into twenty-two different categories, fourteen in major keys and eight in minor keys. He also describes the *joropo* according to geographical criteria.²⁴ The key difference among these regional subgenres relates to transformations in the harmonic progression. In addition, variations in the melodic

²¹ Manuel A. Ortiz, "Joropo: I Origen," *Enciclopedia de la música en Venezuela*, ed. José Peñín y Walter Guido (Caracas: Fundación Bigott, 1998), 69; Luis F. Ramón y Rivera, *El joropo: baile nacional de Venezuela* (Caracas: Ministerio de Educación, 1953), 13.

²² The *cuatro* is a four-stringed instrument in the shape of a small guitar. Internationally, it is considered the emblematic instrument of Venezuela and of the Colombian eastern plains region. It is closely associated with the music of the *joropo* and the accompaniment of the dance.

²³ Romero, *El joropo*, 2004.

²⁴ In his study, Romero distinguishes two types of *joropos* according to region: the *joropo llanero* and *joropo central*. The *joropos* commonly associated with the *llanero* region are *seis por derecho*, *pajarillo*, *quirpa*, and *zumba que zumba*. The *joropos* associated with the *central* region are *joropo mirandino*, *joropo aragüeño* and *golpe larense*—the latter usually identified with the central-western states of Lara and Yaracuy. A third region that Romero deliberately does not address is the *joropo oriental*, due to his lack of information about music of this region.

inflections, instrumentation, and rhythmic structure (particularly in the bass) articulate these differences. With his works for saxophone, Romero devotes special importance to the *quirpa* and the *pajarillo*: two key subgenres. This emphasis is evident in the titles of his compositions such as *Preludio y quirpa*, *Quirpa con variaciones*, and *Fuga con pajarillo*. He classifies both the *quirpa* and the *pajarillo* as *joropos* in the minor mode. In his analysis of the *quirpa*, Romero describes the subgenre as:

the *joropo* with the best harmonic structure ever conceived ... with the best aesthetic purity. ... A display of modulations that puts it in a privileged place among the finest music. ... A perennial invitation to composers who want to make the music of the Venezuelan people a more universal music. ... [A] source that generously provides abundant richness from its harmonies and elegant purity from its compelling modulations.²⁵

In its traditional form, the *quirpa* has a fixed harmonic progression of twenty-four measures with one chord per measure, displaying a harmonic shift toward the mediant from mm. 9-24. In his own analysis of the *quirpa*, Romero presents the following harmonic progression:

Chords: V7 - V7 - I - I - V - V - I - I || ii - ii - vi - vi - III7 - III7 - vi - vi: ||

Measures: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 || 9 - 10 - 11 - 12 - 13 - 14 - 15 - 16 ||
17 - 18 - 19 - 20 - 21 - 22 - 23 - 24 ||

Along with the *quirpa*, the *pajarillo* occupies an important role in Romero's music. The composer comments that this subgenre is one of the most common types of

²⁵ “el joropo armónicamente mejor concebido ... con la mejor pureza estética ... un alarde de modulaciones que hace que busque sitio entre las músicas mejor logradas ... una perenne invitación para los compositores que quieran crear de la música del pueblo venezolano una música más universal ... fuente que dispensa generosamente la abundante riqueza de sus armonías y la elegante pureza conclusiva de su modulación.” Romero, *El joropo*, 40.

joropo in the minor mode. He explains that its popularity is rooted in the elemental harmonic sequence that defines it. As a musical form, the *pajarillo* is the simplest of the *joropos* in the minor mode. Among its most prominent characteristics are fast tempos and rhythmic superimpositions of 3/4 and 6/8 meters. In the *Enciclopedia de la música en Venezuela*,²⁶ the musicologist Carlos García describes the harmonic progression of the *pajarillo* as: i-iv-V-V; a similar harmonic formula is confirmed by Claudia Calderón Sáenz (V7-i-iv-V7).²⁷ However, Romero describes this harmonic scheme in his book as i-V7-V7. This discrepancy can be attributed to a mistake in the edition because Romero's own *pajarillos* uses the harmonic sequence i-iv-V7-V7 repeatedly (Example 2.6). Occasionally the harmonic progression modulates to the relative major key. In this case, it concludes with a cadence popularly known as the *andaluza* (I, ^bVII, ^bVI, V), which transitions back to the original key.

The rhythmic structure of the *joropo* presents a metric duality between 3/4 and 6/8 time, affecting the melodic and rhythmic structure of the accompaniment. This dualism is mainly expressed in the way that the natural accents of the six eighth-notes of the measure can be notated into groups of twos or threes. This metric divergence is expressed in the following two ways:

²⁶ Carlos García, "Pajarillo," *Enciclopedia de la música en Venezuela*, ed. José Peñín y Walter Guido (Caracas: Fundación Bigott, 1998).

²⁷ Claudia Calderón Sáenz, "Sobre la dialéctica entre el golpe corrido y el golpe de seis tipología rítmica, armónica y estructural de los golpes llaneros," Claudia Calderón Sáenz, <http://www.pianollanero.com/publicaciones.html> (accessed November 15, 2012). Also published in *Revista musical de Venezuela* (June, 1999).

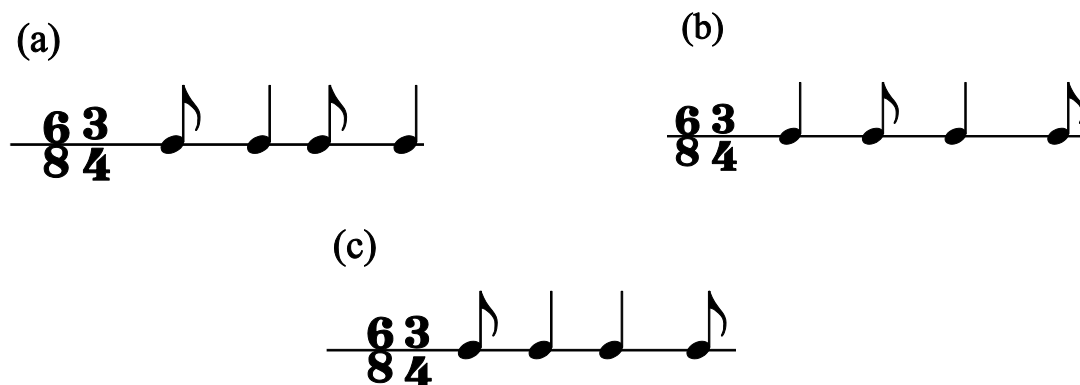


Example 2.1. The Metric Duality of the *joropo* in 3/4 and 6/8 time.

Among the different forms of the *joropo*, it is possible to establish two main rhythmic structures that characterize the accompaniment. The first is *a tiempo* and is linked to the *quirpa*: another name for this pattern is *por corrido*. The main characteristics of this rhythmic structure are accents on the first and third quarter-notes of the measure played by the bass. The *maracas* accentuate the downbeats of the measure; however, the second accent is situated on the fourth eighth-note instead of the fifth. On the third and sixth eighth-notes of the measure fall accents in the *cuatro*. In Example 2.2a, these accents are indicated with the symbol [x].

The other rhythmic pattern is *a contratiempo* and is associated with the *pajarillo*. This pattern is also known as *por derecho*. In this rhythmic structure, the bass line plays the second and third quarter notes of the measure; the *cuatro* displays accents in the first and fourth eighth notes, and the *maraca* sounds on the second and fifth eighth notes (Example 2.2b). This pattern of a *contratiempo* pattern basically displaces the accent one beat from the downbeat of the measure to the second beat in the bass and the *cuatro*; however, the accent is displaced just one eighth note in the *maracas*.

Some of the most frequent rhythmic patterns found in the melody and the accompaniment of the *joropo* are deeply linked to the rhythmic effect produced by the *cuatro*. In the traditional *joropo* ensemble, the *cuatro* acts as a rhythmic stabilizer. It also serves as a source of both rhythmic cohesion and variety. The different kinds of accents



Example 2.3. Rhythmic Schemes of *a tiempo* and *a contratiempo* in the *cuatro*.

These rhythmic patterns and their derivations are the foundation of the structures that Romero uses in many of his compositions.

The *Joropo* in Romero's Music

In both Romero's popular music and his concert works, the composer uses the *joropo* as a signature feature. Under the influence of Latin American musical movements such as Astor Piazzolla's *nuevo tango* and João Gilberto's, Antonio Carlos Jobim's, and Agostinho dos Santos's *bossa nova*, Romero creates his own urban versions of the *joropo* in a style he called *onda nueva*. This style draws upon ternary meters, polyrhythms, and folk lyrics of the *joropo*. It also utilizes frequent harmonic progressions and melodic turns derived from different stylistic variations of the genre. To the *joropo* foundation of the *onda nueva*, Romero includes the use of non-Venezuelan instruments such as the piano, bass, and drum set; melodies and harmonies with jazz-like inflections; and poetic texts that range from the traditional to the lyrical and from the erotic to the romantic. In his classical compositions, Romero deliberately borrows and recasts rhythmic, harmonic and melodic elements from Venezuelan folk music. As a whole, his reliance on traditional features resonates with the perspectives of composers such as George Gershwin, Astor

Piazzolla, and Heitor Villa-Lobos relative to the vernacular music traditions of their own countries. For Romero, the division between the popular and the classical was never an obstacle or barrier for a distinguished composer, but rather a source of profound inspiration. Romero admonished that people forgot “that music was first popular and then classical.” He believed that it was natural “to incorporate the values of popular genres into academic genres.”³⁰

Some examples of how Romero successfully integrated features of the traditional *joropo* into his concert music can be heard in his *Preludio y quirpa* (1997) and his *Fuga con pajarillo* (2005).³¹ In his *Preludio y quirpa*, Romero inserted rhythmic cells of the *a tiempo* pattern—which is related to the *quirpa*—into the melody and the accompaniment. He treated the original patterns shown in Examples 2.2a, and 2.3a-c in diminution, combining two bars of 3/4 time into one 6/8 measure. This can be shown by comparing Examples 2.3a, 2.3b, and 2.3c with mm. 68, 62, and 67, of the alto saxophone part respectively. Romero also referred to the characteristic bass line of the *a tiempo* pattern (Example 2.2a) in the bass part of his *Preludio y quirpa*. In mm. 58-69, he treated this figure in diminution and inserted a subtle variation of its original form by sustaining the duration of the downbeat over the rest of the second beat.³² Otherwise, Romero keeps the same rhythmic figure in the bass. Additionally, he includes the harmonic sequence that traditionally accompanies the *quirpa* (Example 2.4 mm. 58-69).

³⁰ “A la gente se le olvida que primero fue la música fue popular y después clásica ... lo natural es incorporar los valores del género popular al género académico.” Federico Pacanis. *Conversaciones con Aldemaro Romero* (Caracas: Fundación para la Cultura Urbana, 2006), 16-17.

³¹ Romero composed the *Fuga con pajarillo* originally for string orchestra in 1976. Later he re-arranged the piece for eight different instrumental combinations. In this study, I have chosen to focus on the composer’s original arrangement of the work for an ensemble of twelve saxophones.

³² See the explanatory note to Example 2.4.

57

Soprano Saxophone

Alto Saxophone

Tenor Saxophone

Baritone Saxophone

mp

p

p

8va

loco

64

III' *III'* *vi* *V⁷/ii* *V⁷ (ii)* *V⁷ (ii)*

V⁷ *V⁷* *I* *I* *ii* *ii* *vi⁶* *vi⁶*

Example 2.4. Harmonic Sequence and Bass Rhythmic Pattern of the *quirpa* in *Preludio y quirpa*, mm. 57- 69

* Rhythmic scheme of a *tiempo*. Two 3/4 measures equal to one 6/8 measure.



Example 2.4. (continuation). Harmonic Sequence and Bass Rhythmic Pattern of *quirpa* in *Preludio y quirpa*, mm. 57- 69

Another work in which Romero successfully combined traditional Venezuelan elements with international forms is his *Fuga con pajarillo*. This piece, which dated from 1976, was originally composed for string orchestra and arranged by the composer 29 years later for saxophone ensemble. In this piece, Romero repeatedly used elements of the *pajarillo*, such as its fundamental harmonic sequence, its *a contratiempo* pattern, and its wide array of polyrhythms that define *joropo* music (Example 2.6). All these elements converge in the four-voice fugue (Example 2.5) that Romero develops throughout the composition. In this piece, the composer only uses the harmonic progression of the *pajarillo* (i-iv- V7- V7) and focuses on the development of its melodic motives. In this piece, he elaborates an extraordinary use of short rhythmic ideas based on the *joropo* to create musical contrast. Example 2.6 that follows illustrates some of the rhythmic diversity found in the *Fuga con pajarillo*.



Example 2.5. Subject, *Fuga con pajarillo*, mm. 1-8.

481

Sopranino Saxophone

Soprano Saxophone 1

Soprano Saxophone 2

Alto Saxophone 1

Alto Saxophone 2

Alto Saxophone 3

Tenor Saxophone 1

Tenor Saxophone 2

Tenor Saxophone 3

Baritone Saxophone 1

Baritone Saxophone 2

Bass Saxophone

i iv V7 V7 i

Example 2.6. *Fuga con pajarillo* (saxophone ensemble version, 2005) mm. 481-497.

486

Eb Cl.
 Sop. Sax.
 Sop. Sax.
 Alto Sax.
 Alto Sax.
 Alto Sax.
 Ten. Sax.
 Ten. Sax.
 Ten. Sax.
 Bari. Sax.
 Bari. Sax.
 Bass Sax.

iv V7 V7 i iv tr
 tr tr tr tr tr tr

Example 2.6..(continued), mm. 481-497.

492

Eb Cl.
 Sop. Sax.
 Sop. Sax.
 Alto Sax.
 Alto Sax.
 Alto Sax.
 Ten. Sax.
 Ten. Sax.
 Ten. Sax.
 Bari. Sax.
 Bari. Sax.
 Bass Sax.

V7 i iv V7 V7 i

Example 2.6. (continued), mm. 481-497.

This chapter has presented the essential elements of *joropo* music and described how Romero effectively integrated them into his compositions. Furthermore, the chapter has demonstrated how Romero successfully blended genuine elements of the *joropo* with international forms, and how this combination became the basis of his concert music for saxophone. Beyond the two central compositions addressed in this chapter—the *Preludio con quirpa* and the *Fuga con pajarillo*—Romero’s use of *joropo* characteristics (particularly rhythm) plays an important role in many of his other compositions. In the chapters that follow, I illustrate this idea through a detailed analysis of Romero’s works for the saxophone, showing how the composer assimilated the structures of the *joropo* within a diverse amalgam of Venezuelan and international idioms.

Chapter III

Romero's Works for Saxophone

The inclusion of the saxophone as a solo instrument in Romero's music dates back to his beginnings as a popular arranger for RCA Victor during the 1950s. This practice can be heard in Romero's orchestrations of Latin American hits that he produced for the RCA label.³³ Later, during the early 1970s, he included a tenor saxophone as part of the group that he used to launch his urban stylization of the *joropo*, which he called *onda nueva*. After Romero's experiences incorporating the saxophone within popular and salon traditions, it seemed a natural step for him to start writing works that featured the instrument within a concert music setting. Thus, in 1976, Romero composed his *Cuarteto latinoamericano para saxofones*, which was not only his first piece of saxophone concert music, but also one of his first pieces of concert music altogether. Following this work came a list of compositions featuring a saxophone soloist and compositions for saxophone ensemble. This repertoire included two pieces for saxophone and orchestra, four saxophone quartets, and an arrangement of one of Romero's most famous pieces, *Fuga con pajarillo* for saxophone ensemble, discussed earlier in this paper.

³³ In 1952, Romero began a series of successful orchestral recordings that featured Latin American styles of salon music for the record label RCA Victor. The titles of each record in the series began with the words "Dinner in" and ended with the names of Latin American cities or countries, such as Caracas, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Havana, Colombia, and Mexico. Each recording drew upon the popular music of its respective region.

The Italian publisher, Pagani Edizioni Musicali, owns the copyright to Romero's music. Within that legal arrangement, some of his saxophone compositions have been assigned to three German subpublishers; 1) Antes Edition, 2) Tonos Musikverlags GmbH, and 3) and Edition 49, resulting in the partial publication of Romero's saxophone music. However, in certain cases, the indications on the publisher's websites are unclear, and the actual pieces they have published are unidentified, making it difficult to determine the extent of the composer's output in print to this date.³⁴ Yet, even though only some of Romero's saxophone music has appeared in published editions, his total output for the instrument exists in music manuscripts housed at the Special Collections Department of the University of Miami Libraries and is accessible to the public through the Special Collections website in digital form.³⁵ A key element during the preparation of this paper was the ability to access Romero's original manuscripts. They provided a reliable source of the composer's original notation, instrumentation, and commentary, along with firsthand insights into his compositional style.

In this chapter, I describe six of Romero's solo and chamber saxophone works. Here, I seek to inform the reader about the musical characteristics of these little-known compositions as well as shed light on the general features of Romero's idiomatic writing for the instrument. These descriptions feature detailed information about the pieces, including their histories, dedications, and reviews of their premieres, (whenever

³⁴ So far, Romero's works for saxophone printed by Antes Edition are: *Concerto for Paquito, Saxomanía*, and one unidentified piece for saxophone quartet which appears on the publisher's website under the title, "Saxophone Quartet." The pieces published by Tonos Musikverlags GmbH are two unidentified compositions for saxophone quartet which appear online under the title "Saxophone Quartet." Edition 49 published the *Cuarteto latinoamericano para saxofones*.

³⁵ University of Miami, <http://merrick.library.miami.edu/specialCollections/asm0038/> (accessed October 22, 2012).

applicable). I also include commentary about the stylistic features of the pieces, as well as their instrumentation. At the end of the chapter, I summarize general characteristics of the composer's saxophone production.

In selecting the pieces for this study, I have focused on compositions in which the saxophone plays a principal role. These works can be divided into two categories: 1) pieces for solo saxophone and symphonic ensemble and 2) works for saxophone ensemble alone. The first category includes Romero's *Concerto for Paquito* (1999) for saxophone and orchestra and *Gurrufío en onda nueva* (2001) for saxophone, small wind ensemble, and string orchestra.³⁶ In the second category falls his *Cuarteto latinoamericano para saxofones* (1976), *Preludio y quirpa* (1997), *Fuga con pajarillo* (1999), and *Quirpa con Variaciones* (2003)—all for saxophone quartet. Here, I will begin by describing two of Romero's works for saxophone and orchestra—his *Concerto for Paquito* and *Gurrufío en onda nueva*, which highlight the saxophone as a concert instrument.

Works for Saxophone and Orchestra

1 Title: *Concerto for Paquito* for alto saxophone (clarinet) and symphonic orchestra

Composition Date: 1999

Dedication: Paquito D'Rivera

Movements:

I. Allegro

³⁶ Romero also used the saxophone as part of an ensemble with sporadic soloist interventions in compositions such as his *Bienmesabes* and *Merengón*. As mentioned earlier, these works do not focus specifically on the saxophone and therefore lie outside the scope of this essay, although I hope that future studies will address this important aspect of Romero's creative production.

II. Andantino

III. [Untitled]

Instrumentation: alto saxophone with pcc, 2 fl, 2 ob, eng hn, 2 cl, bs cl, 2 bn, dbn, 4 hn, 2 tpt, 3 trbn, bs trbn, cym, glock, sn-d, hp, pf, bell tree, 2 vn, va, vc, db

Premiere: 1999, Caracas, Gregory Parra and the Orquesta Sinfónica Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho

Edition: Tonos Music

A characteristic feature of this concerto is its rhythmic richness. This trait is expressed through a variety of meters that occur throughout the three movements (I: 4/4; II: 5/4 and 3/4 and III: 6/8), as well as through a consistent use of multiple rhythmic ostinatos, mainly derived from Latin American rhythms. The first movement, Allegro, features a recurrent use of syncopated rhythms, particularly in the brass section and the lower strings (Example 3.1a). These rhythmic schemes allude to the rhythms widely used in Latin American music, specifically in salsa music (Example 3.1b) and *bossa nova* (Example 3.1c)—both genres with which Romero was acquainted. The syncopated rhythms contrast with the almost mechanical rhythm of sixteenth notes in the soloist's part (mm.43-48, not shown).



Example 3.1a. Concerto for Paquito. mm. 45-52 cello and bass parts.

Example 3.1b shows the brass section (Horn in F 1, 2, 3, 4; Trumpet in B 1, 2; Trombone 1, 2, 3; Bass Trombone) in measures 22-26. The music is in 4/4 time and features a salsa groove. The Horns and Trumpets play chords and melodic lines, while the Trombones and Bass Trombone provide harmonic support. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *p* (piano).

Example 3.1b. Concerto for Paquito. mm. 22-26 brass section, salsa groove.

Example 3.1c shows the bass part in measures 99-102. The music is in 4/4 time and features a bossa nova rhythmic scheme. The bass line is marked *pizz.* (pizzicato) and *p* (piano).

Example 3.1c. Concerto for Paquito. mm 99-102 *bossa nova* rhythmic scheme, bass part.

The second movement, *Andantino*, uses a clarinet instead of a saxophone. The opening solo line is built on a four-measure rhythmic motive (Example 3.2) that Romero develops through the first part of the movement. This musical idea flows over multiple layers of rhythmic activity created by the strings, percussion and harp. The indication, “*andantino*” at the beginning of this movement suggests a slow-medium tempo; paradoxically the composer gives the metronome marking of $\text{♩} = 145$. This movement is constructed from two themes: the first in the key F minor in 5/4 time (mm. 1-52)

(Example 3.2) and the second in C minor in 3/4 time (mm. 53-82), with the indication *meno mosso* (Example 3.3).



Example 3.2. Concerto for Paquito. II, motive 1, mm. 3-7, clarinet part.



Example 3.3. Concerto for Paquito. II, motive 2, mm. 53-56, clarinet part.

In the third movement, Romero uses the alto saxophone again. In the manuscript, the composer does not provide any expressive indications—simply the metronome marking $\text{♩} = 160$. This notation is unusual, considering the 6/8 time signature of the movement. However, this metronomic indication cleverly conveys the rhythmic structure of the musical phrases. Since the music exhibits multiple meters simultaneously (6/8, 2/4 and 3/4), this tempo marking condenses all the meters into a single one. Although Romero nowhere in the score specifies *joropo* or any related word, the rhythmic schemes of the melodies, accompaniment, and bass reveal characteristic features of the genre. For instance, the main melodic lines superimpose quadruple division of the beat against ternary figures in the accompaniment—a characteristic found in other Romero's works such as *Quirpa con variaciones* or *Saxomanía*. Additionally, the bass part exhibits the rhythmic patterns associated with the *a tiempo* scheme.³⁷ Nevertheless, the bass line does

³⁷ For further reference to this rhythmic pattern see Chapter II, page 26.

not maintain any fixed *joropo* rhythmic structure throughout the movement. It rather changes constantly, grouping segments of four, eight, sixteen or thirty-two measures together. The movement revolves around C minor as a main tonal center; however, the harmonic sequences do not exhibit any chord progressions common to the *joropo* genre. The harmonies mainly revolve around a pedal note C, with changing chords that derive from it. Other sections rely on a harmonic motion based on variations of the circle of fifths.

2 Title: *Gurrufío en onda nueva*

Composition date: 2002

Dedication: Ensamble Gurrufío

Instrumentation: fl , ob, cl, bs cl, hn, as, 2vn, va, vc, db, maraca, *cuatro*

Movements: ♩ = 140

This composition is written as a single movement divided into two large sections differentiated by meter. The first is in 4/4 time, and the second in 6/8 time. In this work, Romero juxtaposes two different compositional styles. In the 4/4 section, he tends to use the woodwind instruments homorhythmically, with sporadic interjections of sixteen notes in the form of imitation. On the other hand, the string section operates as the musical foundation through its use of long sustained sounds that support the woodwinds.

The second section has a more polyphonic texture presenting at least three different layers of rhythmic activity at any given moment, which are divided among the string section, the woodwind section, the saxophone soloist, and the *cuatro*. The inclusion of the *cuatro* adds a distinctive timbre to this section and contrast to the piece as a whole. The inclusion of Venezuelan music elements offers balance and variety to the piece. The

words “onda nueva” in the title reveals characteristics of the music in this style such as the mixture of traditional Venezuelan music and instruments with international elements: in this case, orchestral instruments and harmonies with jazz-like inflexions.

Romero frequently presents his main musical ideas in the form of melodic sequences, which he repeatedly develops over rhythmic ostinatos in the accompaniment. Throughout the piece, the melodic line in the solo part is characterized by the use of sustained notes, which are sporadically interrupted by sections with sixteen notes that mainly occur at the end of the work. By evoking this lyrical character, Romero takes advantage of the singing qualities of the saxophone, translating a vocal style into an instrumental idiom.

Works for Saxophone Ensemble

3 Fuga con pajarillo (saxophone version)

Composition date: 1976

Arrangements: saxophone quartet, 1999; saxophone ensemble, 2005

Dedication: Juan Bautista Plaza³⁸

Movements: I

Instrumentation: ss, as, ts, bar; saxophone ensemble: sss, 2 ss, 3 as, 3 ts, 2 bar, bsx.

Premiere: 1997, Caracas, Quartetto di Sassofoni Accademia (Accademia de Pescara

Saxophone Quartet)

Edition: *Pagani Edizioni Musicali*

³⁸ Juan Bautista Plaza (1898-196) was a Venezuelan composer whose music is acknowledged as one of the pillars of the music movement in this country during the 20th century.

This composition is the first movement of a larger work titled Suite for String Orchestra,³⁹ which was premiered in London in 1976 by the English Chamber Orchestra. This piece is regarded as one of Romero's most famous compositions, which he accordingly rearranged for eight different instrumental combinations. The work features traditional Venezuelan rhythms and harmonic progressions common to *joropo* music, particularly to the *pajarillo*. One of the most prominent aspects of this piece is its rhythmic richness, which is expressed in a multiplicity of polyrhythms and hemiolas. The entire piece is built in a simple harmonic progression (i - iv - V7- i) with modulations to closely related harmonic areas. Variety in the work comes from its motivic elaboration and from the rich collection of rhythmic combinations that characterize *joropo* music.⁴⁰

3a Fuga con pajarillo, versión para orquesta de 12 saxofones

Arrangement: 2005

Instrumentation: sss, 2 ss, 3 as, 3 ts, 2 bar, bsx

Premiere: Miami, November 2012 by Frost Saxophone Ensemble

This version is a re-arrangement of his composition for string orchestra. In this adaptation, Romero treats the saxophone sections (sopranos, altos, tenors, etc) pretty much as he would a string orchestra. It means that the alto saxophone section—written for three alto saxophones lines—plays in unison throughout most of the work; the same could be said about the other saxophone sections.

³⁹ The movements of the complete suite include: 1) *Fuga con pajarillo*, 2) *Vals para clementina*, 3) *La fuerza del merengue*, and 4) *Fuga con pajarapinta bimodal y seis numerao*.

⁴⁰ For an in-depth analysis of this piece, see Chapter II, page 30.

4 *Preludio y quirpa*

Composition date: 1997

Instrumentation: Saxophone quartet: ss, as, ts, bar

Premiere: Caracas, 1997 by Saxofonía

Edition: Pagani s.r.l. Edizioni Musicali

This piece exhibits Romero's musical syncretism of classical genres and traditional Venezuelan music. The work is divided into two sections: the *preludio* and the *quirpa*. The *preludio* is written in a 6/8 time signature with a tempo mark of *moderato*. Romero wrote this section in a homophonic style, giving the soprano saxophone the main melody. The phrases are shaped in groups of four bars and alternate between two types of passages: those with steady tempos and those featuring rhapsodic music in a cadenza-like style. This section is filled with beautiful melodies that have an intensely rhythmic character. The harmonic area focuses on B^b major, however, there is also a special inclination toward the vi, IV, and ii harmonic regions.

The second section—the *quirpa*— is labeled as *tempo di joropo*, implying a fast tempo. The word *quirpa* gives a musical framework with which to perceive the music. The bass line displays characteristic rhythmic and harmonic features of the *quirpa* such as a 24-chord progression and the *a tiempo* rhythmic pattern. The melodies and their accompaniments reflect a rich spectrum of distinctive rhythmic combinations derived from the *cuatro* rhythmic scheme.⁴¹ The rhythmic notation used by Romero in this

⁴¹ For an in-depth explanation see Chapter II, page 28.

section condenses two measures of the common $3/4$ *joropo* notation into one $6/8$ measure.⁴²

5 Cuarteto latinoamericano para saxofones

Composition date: 1976

Dedication: Unspecified

Movements: I. *Fandango* II. *Serenata* III. *Choro y Tango*

Instrumentation: Saxophone quartet: ss, as, ts, bar

Premiere: Los Angeles, CA, 1977

Edition: Edition 49

Romero wrote this quartet in London during his first period of classical composition. This piece has importance in his saxophone literature not just for the excellent quality of the music, but also because it was the first work that the composer got published for the instrument. The title *Cuarteto latinoamericano* gives us an idea of the musical content of this work. The piece opens with a movement titled, “Fandango,”⁴³ which portrays live rhythmic music associated with dances of the Iberian peninsula. Characteristic features of this movement include the use of rhythmic ostinatos, the opposition of $6/8$, $3/4$, and $2/4$ meters, and motivic development. The second movement, “Serenata,” contrasts with the fast tempo and the strong rhythmic temperament of the first movement by using a slow and lyrical melody played by the soprano saxophone.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ The *fandango* is a dance originally from Spain, which became widespread in Latin America, where it was transformed.

The last movement has a festive character and features two well-known musical styles in Latin America: *choro* and tango. The first section of this movement features characteristic musical elements from the traditional Brazilian *choro*: syncopated binary rhythms, an improvised character of the melody, and a dance-like feel. The second section of the movement, tango, is divided into two smaller parts. The first begins in a homophonic texture with the soprano saxophone leading the melody at the same time that the accompaniment plays tight ostinato figures characteristic of the tango. The second features a polyphonic texture, which contrast with the first. The movement closes with short da capo coda in the style of a *choro*.

6 *Quripa con variaciones*

Composition date: 2003

Dedication: Unspecified

Instrumentation: Saxophone quartet: ss, as, ts, bar

Premiere: Miami, April, 2013 by Frost Saxophone Quartet

Edition: Edition 49

This work was the last composition that Romero wrote for this kind of ensemble. The quartet features a single movement with characteristic elements of the *quirpa*,⁴⁴ such as the distinctive rhythmic scheme of the bass and the 24-chord harmonic progression.⁴⁵ This piece has F major as a main tonal center and C major as a secondary tonality. These two harmonic areas move back and forth throughout the composition. Romero used in

⁴⁴ See Chapter II—page 23 for broader information about the *quirpa*

⁴⁵ Ibid, Romero's notation for the *quirpa* halves the notes value. Consequently, two measures of 6/8 reduce into one. See Chapter II, page 28, for further explanation of this aspect of Romero's writing

this work a rich collection of rhythmic patterns associated with the *joropo*, set in a three-voice fugal style. This work utilizes an exuberant counterpoint, along with sporadic four-measure homophonic segments throughout.

As a whole, Romero's production for the saxophone offers an invaluable contribution, not just to the saxophone literature, but to the Latin American repertoire as a whole. His use of the instrument brings together classical, international, and traditional Venezuelan music in a distinctive style that is deeply rooted in his cultural background, natural talent, and life experiences as a musician. His writing for saxophone with orchestra, saxophone ensemble, and related instrumental combinations, implies a thorough knowledge of the potential of the instrument, especially in regard to its lyrical capabilities. This group of pieces, which is primarily unknown, reflects the contribution of a unique musical voice from Latin America.

Chapter IV

Analysis of *Saxomanía* for Saxophone Quartet and Symphonic Orchestra

This chapter will explore key aspects of Romero's *Saxomanía* for saxophone quartet and symphonic orchestra (2000). Romero completed this work in October 2000. On April 25, 2001, the Italian saxophone quartet, Quartetto di Sassofoni Accademia de Pescara, performed the piece in Maracaibo, Venezuela, accompanied by the Orquesta Sinfónica de Maracaibo and conducted by Aldemaro Romero himself.⁴⁶ In this chapter, I will highlight Romero's incorporation of traditional Venezuelan musical elements into his orchestral work. I will address the motivic, formal, and harmonic construction of *Saxomanía*, as well as the composer's use of a distinctive style of Venezuelan *merengue*.⁴⁷

Musical Influences in *Saxomanía*

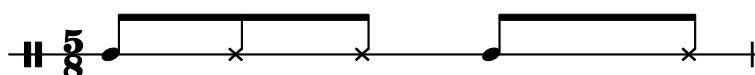
The first movement of *Saxomanía* is based in a traditional rhythm associated with the Venezuelan *merengue*. Since this style plays a critical role in *Saxomanía*, it is important to address some key aspects of the genre. The nature of this rhythm is a

⁴⁶ Romero's collaboration with the Accademia Saxophone Quartet resulted in the recording of three of his works for saxophone quartet: *Cuarteto latinoamericano para saxofones* (1976), *Fuga con pajarillo* (1999), and *Preludio y quirpa*.

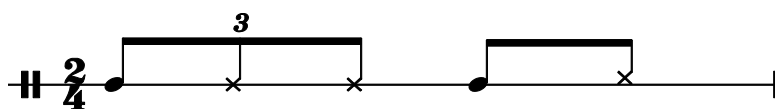
⁴⁷ The Venezuelan *merengue*—also known as *merengue caraqueño*—has no relation whatsoever with the *merengue* performed in the Dominican Republic and other areas of the Caribbean such as Haiti, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Colombia. Although both genres share the same name, their instrumentation and musical structure are completely different.

danceable two-beat meter. The dancers perform an accent with the right foot on the downbeat of the first measure. They then execute with the left foot a second accent on the first beat of the second measure, resulting in a two-measure unit.⁴⁸ This consideration will have a significant importance in the musical structure of *Saxomanía*.

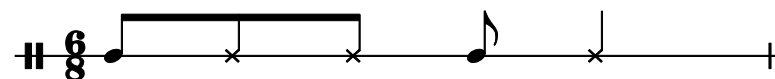
The origin and notation of this rhythm has been a source of controversy among Venezuelan musicians and scholars—a controversy that exists to this day. In terms of the rhythmic notation, the discrepancy comes from different musicians' use of 5/8, 2/4, or 6/8 time signatures to transcribe the music. However, no matter which time signature is used, the fundamental characteristic of this rhythm is a five-note structure. The following examples illustrate the different notational possibilities (see Examples 4.1a-c). In these examples, the standard blackened pitches represent accents and the pitches indicated with the letter x are sounded, but unaccented.



Example 4.1a. *Merengue* in a 5/8 meter



Example 4.1b. *Merengue* in a 2/4 meter



Example 4.1c. *Merengue* in a 6/8 meter

⁴⁸ Emilio Mendoza, "Merengue Venezolano," http://prof.usb.ve/emendoza/emilioweb/articulos/Merengue_venezolano.pdf (accessed, January 9, 2003).

Romero's perspective about this issue is clear. In *La música de Carabobo*,⁴⁹ he devotes several pages to the *merengue*. In an extensive non-technical explanation for informed music listeners, the composer presents several reasons why he considers the correct notation for this music 6/8 time.⁵⁰ Additionally, he offers examples of Venezuelan *merengues* and their lyrics to illustrate his point. He bases his views on his experiences conducting orchestras around the world, with musicians who never had contact before with the Venezuelan *merengue* and needed an internationally comprehensible way to understand this rhythm. On the other hand, in Venezuela, Romero acknowledged that local musicians would understand how to perform these patterns naturally and even add their own interpretive freedom to the notation that extends beyond the score.

A characteristic element of Romero's writing in this work—and his notation of traditional Venezuelan music in general—is his use of rhythmic diminution. Consequently, he reduces the two 6/8 measures that encompass the five-note pattern of the *merengue* (see Example 4.1c) into one 6/8 measure (see Example 4.2).⁵¹ A suitable example to show this aspect of his writing is *Merengón* (2001), a piece for strings and woodwinds in which, in his own words, he exploits the maximum rhythmic possibilities of the *merengue*.⁵²

⁴⁹ Aldemaro Romero, *La música de Carabobo*, (Valencia, Venezuela: Consejo Legislativo del Estado de Carabobo, 2006), 126-51.

⁵⁰ Romero supported this premise with two musical arguments. Because the Venezuelan *merengue* uses a multimetric framework that juxtaposes 6/8 and 4/4 meter (with the 4/4 meter using steady sixteenths), he believed that this complex structure could only be notated in 6/8 time. Second, he argued that the three-quarters-note bass-line pattern could only be assimilated within this meter. Ibid, 148-149.

⁵¹ For a broader explanation of this characteristic of Romero's writing, see Chapter II, page 28.

⁵² Aldemaro Romero, *La música de Carabobo*, 148.



Example 4.2. *Merengón*. m. 1. oboe part

Musical Analysis

The instrumentation of *Saxomanía* presents an uncommon instrumentation in the symphonic repertoire, consisting of a saxophone quartet and a reduced orchestra. This piece is scored for SATB saxophone quartet accompanied by winds, brass, strings and percussion. However, in the woodwind and brass sections (with the exception of the two clarinets and horns), Romero only uses a single instrumental part. In addition, he omits the two upper trombones although he does include a bass trombone part. In my opinion, Romero does this for the sake of achieving an optimum balance between the quartet and the orchestra, favoring the preponderance of the strings and saxophone quartet over the brass and the percussion sections.

As a general rule in this work, Romero separates the orchestral texture from the saxophone quartet, avoiding musical duplications between them. This textural treatment creates multiple and constant layers of activity between the quartet and the orchestra. Throughout the piece, Romero uses the saxophone quartet as a unified sound entity within a homophonic texture, sporadically expanding the musical fabric to include intricate rhythmic contrapuntal sections. Romero uses this approach in the first and third movements, although, in the second movement, he approaches the soprano saxophone as soloist, leaving the orchestra and the other three saxophones to function as a harmonic background.

Movement I (♩ = 60)

The work opens with the characteristic five-note rhythmic pattern of the Venezuelan *merengue* (see Example 4.2)—a rhythmic motive that will fuel the thematic material throughout the movement. The *merengue* pattern in the first half of m. 1 is complemented by a four-note figure in the second part of the measure that leads to ♩ on the downbeat of the second measure. Together these musical ideas form a two-measure unit that will appear consistently throughout the movement (Example 4.3). Romero exploits this two-measure motive (M1) incessantly during the first 64 measures, trading it back and forth between the quartet and the orchestra, segmenting, transposing, and re-cycling it.

Example 4.3. *Saxomanía*. Motive 1 (M1), mm. 1-2

Romero contrasts M1 with another characteristic rhythmic cell of the *merengue* that he points out in *La música de Carabobo*: a quadruple rhythmic division. The brass section introduces this contrasting motive in m. 1, presenting it as a rigid homorhythmic

block of sound. Next, the saxophone section introduces the same rhythmic pattern in m. 2, but now in a melodic design. This musical idea is labeled M2 (see Example 4.4).

The musical score for Example 4.4, *Saxomanía*, Motive 2 (M2), mm 1-2, is presented in two systems. The first system (mm 1-2) shows the Saxophone section (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Baritone) and the Horn/Trumpet/Trombone section. The Saxophones play a melodic line in m. 2, while the other instruments play a rhythmic pattern in m. 1. The second system (mm 3-4) shows the Saxophones playing a melodic line in m. 3, while the other instruments play a rhythmic pattern in m. 2. The score is written in 4/4 time and features a variety of dynamics and articulations.

Instrumentation and Dynamics:

- Saxophone Section:** Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Baritone Saxophones. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte).
- Horn/Trumpet/Trombone Section:** Horn in F 1, Horn in F 2, Horn in F 3, Horn in F 4, Trumpet in B, and Bass Trombone. Dynamics include *f* (forte), *sfz* (sforzando), and *p* (piano).

Articulation and Rhythm:

- Saxophones:** Melodic lines with slurs and accents. Rhythmic patterns are marked with '4' (quadruple) and '4' (quadruple).
- Horn/Trumpet/Trombone:** Rhythmic patterns with slurs and accents. Dynamics include *f* (forte), *sfz* (sforzando), and *p* (piano).

Example 4.4. *Saxomanía*. Motive 2 (M2), mm 1-2

The simultaneous superimposition of the ternary subdivisions of M1, against the quadruple subdivision of M2, generates a strong rhythmic displacement that will coexist throughout the entire movement.

The musical score for Example 4.5, *Saxomanía*, Theme 1 (P1), mm 21-28, is presented in a standard orchestral format. The score includes parts for the following instruments: Flute, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass, Harp, and Glockenspiel. The music is written in 3/4 time and features a simple eight-measure theme introduced by the flute, glockenspiel, and harp in measure 21. The theme is composed of dotted quarter notes. The score shows the first eight measures of the theme, with the flute, glockenspiel, and harp playing the melody and the other instruments providing harmonic support.

Example 4.5. *Saxomanía*. Theme 1 (P1), mm 21-28

The flute, glockenspiel and harp introduce theme one (P1) in m. 21. The simple eight-measure theme is made up of dotted quarter notes. It is accompanied by colorful

harmonies delineated by the tenor and alto saxophones and filled in with rhythmic interjections by the string section. Romero develops P1 until m. 64, using M1 and M2 as accompanying and contrasting material for the section (Examples 4.5).

In m. 65, the soprano saxophone introduces a 24-measure transition (T) that extends from mm. 65-88. This transitional section is made up of two main motives. The first occurs initially in mm. 64-65, and the second in mm. 73-74. The first motive (T1), sounded in mm. 63-65 (Example 4.6a) develops in the form of an eight-measure melodic-rhythmic sequence in mm. 65-72. The second idea is a two-measure motive (T2) made of sustained notes sounded in mm. 73-74 (Example 4.6b). This section extends for twelve measures from mm. 73-84. T1 reappears again in mm. 136-144, and T2 in mm. 120-128. From mm. 85-88, Romero reintroduces the rhythmic structure of M1 to close this transitional section (Example 4.3).



Example 4.6a. *Saxomanía*. Transition Theme 1 (T1), soprano saxophone part, mm. 64-65



Example 4.6b. *Saxomanía*. Transition Theme 2 (T2), flute part, mm. 73-74

In m. 89, the violins introduce a second theme (S1) (Example 4.7). S1 has a similar rhythmic and melodic contour as P1. However, the melodic intervals in S1, characterized by fifths and semitones, are narrower than the intervals of P1, typified by fifths and octaves. Additionally, the harmonic progression that accompanies S1 is more

stable than P1, remaining within a single tonal area—A minor. The violins pass S1 to the piccolo, oboe, trumpet, harp, and glockenspiel in m. 97 to repeat the eight-measure S1 theme, but this time with different articulations and note lengths. To conclude the presentation of S1, Romero adds flute, English horn, clarinets and horns to a four-measure variation of S1.

From measure 109 onward, Romero starts a development section in which he combines, varies, and superimposes themes and motives presented during the exposition. For instance, in mm. 121-128, the horns, violins, and violas play T2. At the same time, the baritone saxophone and cellos present variations of M1 in imitation during alternating measures.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Violin I and Violin II. The first system, labeled 'Violin I' and 'Violin II', shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests in 6/8 time. The second system, labeled 'Vln. I' and 'Vln. II', shows a variation of the pattern, with some notes marked with a flat (B-flat). The key signature is one flat (B-flat).

Example 4.7. *Saxomania*. Theme Two (S1) violins I, II, mm. 89-96

Another example of Romero's manipulation of the thematic material from the exposition occurs in mm. 137-144. There, the flute, trumpet, and glockenspiels play T1 while the saxophone plays a variation of this idea in m. 176, until it yields in the following measure to the recapitulation.

The recapitulation, beginning in m. 177, has two singular features: 1) the lack of a re-exposition of P1 and 2) the reprise of S1 but in the same key as the exposition. These two aspects lie outside the traditional archetype of the sonata form. In m. 197, the saxophone quartet introduces an 8-measure transition built essentially on M1 and M2. Such a transition leads to a sort of second development from mm. 205-240, in which the core of the music derives from S1. Here, S1 repeats three times, twice in the violin section (mm. 217-232) and once in the solo trumpet (mm. 233-240), closing with a short coda in mm. 241-50.

As a whole, the movement presents the structure of a modified sonata form. The difference between this movement and the classical form comes primarily in the recapitulation, in which the opening material does not return in the home key. An unusual feature, as illustrated in the diagram below, is Romero's failure to recapitulate the opening theme and his treatment of the secondary thematic material in the harmonic areas of VII and V in the recapitulation, instead of in the home key. The following diagram synthesizes the structure of this movement (Table 4.1).

Section	Introduction		Exposition			
Theme	M1	M2	P1	Trans.	S1	closing group
Key: Eb	X		I	V V/VII	VII - V V7/VI	VII
Measures	1	20	20 - 64	65 - 88	89 - 104	105 - 108

Table 4.1. *Saxomanía*. Movement I— Introduction and Exposition—Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes, mm. 1-108.

Section	Development					
Theme	M1	T2 + M2	M1 + M1'	T1 + T1'	S1 M1''	M2' + M1
Key	vii	V/V	V/V	X V/VII	VII	I
Measure	109-120	121-128	129 - 136	137 - 144	145-152	153 - 176

Table 4.2. Movement I— Development—Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes, mm. 109-176.

Section	Recapitulation	Coda
Theme	S1	
Key	VII	I
Measure	177 - 240	241 – 250

Table 4.3. *Saxomanía*. Movement I—Recapitulation and Coda— Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes, mm. 177-20

Movement II

This movement functions as a contrasting section within the composition as a whole. It is written in a slow 4/4 time, with a metronome marking of $\text{♩} = 63$. It revolves around the soprano saxophone as a soloist. By exploiting the special expressive and lyric qualities of the instrument, Romero conveys a romantic and even nostalgic character. The music style that he uses in the main themes of this movement seems more suitable for vocal lines than instrumental ones. These themes recall melodies he used in his popular romantic songs. An example of this feature can be found in section C (mm. 103-116). There the melodic contour of the theme recalls the melodic line of one of his most popular romantic songs, “De repente.” Another example occurs in the main melody of

section B (mm. 57-86), which recalls the sentiment of Cuban *boleros*—a genre that Romero used frequently in his songs and for which he had particular affection.

This movement opens with a 16-measure section played by the saxophone quartet with the melody in the soprano saxophone throughout. The alto, tenor, and baritone saxophones accompany the soloist in homorhythmic blocks of chords consisting of quarter notes. In m. 17, the string, brass, and woodwind sections join the saxophone quartet for 10 additional measures to conclude the introduction. From m. 27 onward, Romero divides the movement into three main sections (labeled A, B, C) and concludes the movement with a short coda. These sections alternate 3/4 and 4/4 time signatures successively. As a whole, the movement reveals a ternary structure with the addition of an introduction and coda.

The A section encloses two motives of two measures each: one from mm. 27-28 and the other from mm. 39-40 (Examples 4.8a-b). The saxophones develop both motives immediately after Romero introduces them. During the A section (mm. 27-54), the composer uses the alto, tenor, and baritone saxophones to support the solo line—creating a homorhythmic texture. After that, Romero only uses the soprano saxophone in conjunction with the other three instruments during the coda (mm. 117-124).



Example 4.8a. *Saxomanía*. Movement II, Section A, Motive 1, mm. 27-28, soprano saxophone part



Example 4.8b. *Saxomanía*. Movement II, Section A, Motive 2, mm. 39-40, soprano saxophone part

In mm. 57-58, the soprano saxophone introduces the first of the two motives that constitutes the B section (Example 4.9a). Romero develops the first motive (M1) from mm. 57-70, using almost the same instrumentation as in the introduction— letting the soloist play the melody while the alto, tenor and baritone saxophones provide a homorhythmic quarter-note accompaniment. As an additional element, the composer inserts quarter notes in beats 1 and 4 in the strings to highlight the beginning of each motive. The composer introduces the second motive of this section in mm. 71-72 (Example 4.9b) and develops it from mm. 73-102. Romero unfolds this motive in the soprano saxophone for eight measures and then passes it to the orchestra in m. 79, which sounds the musical idea for eight measures with minor variations. To conclude the section, the orchestra returns the motive to the soprano saxophone in m. 87, which develops it until measure 102.



Example 4.9a. *Saxomanía*. Movement II, Section B, Motive 1, mm. 57-58, soprano saxophone part



Example 4.9b. *Saxomanía*. Movement II, Section B, Motive 1, mm. 71-72, soprano saxophone part

The cellos, violas, and horns introduce the main motive of section C in m. 103 (Example 4.10) and extend it for 16 bars until m. 116. By adding layers of rhythmic activity, changes of instrumentation in the main theme, and an ascending melodic line,

Romero creates a crescendo effect that reaches the climax of the movement in measure 111. He then quickly dissolves the tension in a short coda from mm. 117-124.



Example 4.10. *Saxomanía*. Movement II, Section C, Motive 1, m. 103, horn I part

Section	Intro.	A		B			C	Coda
Theme		M1	M2	M1	M2	M2'	M1	
Key: Ab	vii	ii - VI		VI		V	I	
Measure	1 - 26	27 - 38	39 - 54	57-70	71- 86	87- 102	103-116	117-124

Table 4.4. *Saxomanía*. Movement II—Intro, A-B-C and Coda— Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes, mm. 1-124

Movement III

This movement uses a scherzo character with a tempo mark of $\text{♩} = 120$. It begins with the saxophone quartet playing an eight-measure introduction that features a lively rhythmic interplay and an unstable harmonic progression. Subsequently, two rhythmic ostinatos divide the movement into two large sections: one from mm. 9-48 and another from mm. 73-108. Romero develops each of these ostinatos in segments of eight and twelve measures respectively. Connecting the two ostinatos is a sixteen-bar transition which features the harp as a soloist (mm. 57-72). Finally, a ten-measure coda concludes the movement. The harmonies and melodies of this movement feature a distinctive *onda nueva* style, harmonies with a jazz-like character, and small motives that develop into themes of two or four measures and that often move in half steps.

The first ostinato (O1) — mm. 9- 48—is a one-bar motive made of continuous sixteenth-notes. Large leaps and an odd melodic construction characterize this short musical idea (Example 4.11). In order to ease the technical difficulty of O1, Romero divides it between the low strings (basses, cellos, and violas) creating a continuous flow of sixteenth-notes. The same technique applies to the low woodwinds (bassoon and bass clarinet) and later to the saxophone quartet. As a technical resource for creating variety during the execution of this ostinato, Romero changes the rhythmic background as well as the orchestration that accompanies O1 every time he introduces a new theme in this section; both variations occur in the strings.



Example 4.11. *Saxomanía*. Movement III, Ostinato 1 (O1), m. 9, cello and viola parts

The harmony that accompanies O1 is based on a fixed progression of twelve chords that unfold within eight measures. The first four measures of the progression feature two different chords (Ebm7, Cm9) sounded on alternate measures. The last four measures features harmonic changes on every half-note of the measure, creating a progression of eight chords shown in the example below (Example 4.12). This style of chord changes—commonly associated with jazz because the voicing and extended tertian sonorities—is repeatedly found in Romero’s popular and symphonic music.

Romero superimposes three themes on top of O1 which he fails to develop further in the movement. A characteristic feature of these themes—and Romero’s compositional style in general—relates to their motivic derivation. The composer takes two-measure motivic units and elaborates them into eight-measure themes. The first violins present the first of these themes from mm. 17- 24 (Example 4.13).

Example 4.12. *Saxomanía*. Movement III, Harmonic Progression O1, mm 9-48

Example 4.13. *Saxomanía*. Movement III, Theme 1, violin I, mm. 17-24

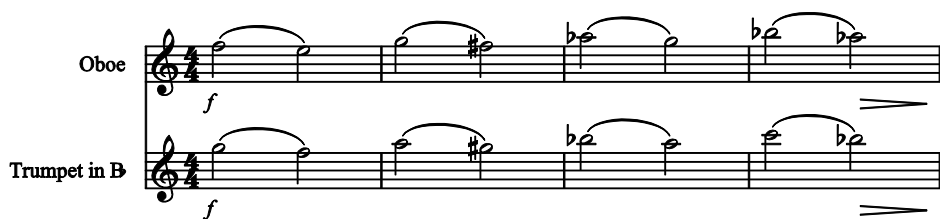
This theme is a typical example of Romero’s motivic elaboration. The one-bar motive develops into a two-measure unit, which the composer repeats four times. However, each

repetition always has a slight difference and avoids melodic redundancies. Romero does that using subtle rhythmic variations and chromatic ascending or descending intervals. A particular feature of this theme is the uses of tremolo effects. Through this technique, Romero adds rhythmic intensity to the theme and creates a timbre that projects over the thick rhythmic texture of the orchestra.

Romero introduces the next two themes in the saxophone quartet. They appear in mm. 33-40 and 41-48 respectively. By m. 35, Romero has reduced the sixteenth-note ostinato from an orchestral texture to a two-line musical fabric. Over a thin instrumentation the tenor saxophone introduces the second theme, which is characterized by dotted eighth-note and sixteenth-note rhythms. Later, in measures 41-48, the soprano and alto saxophones introduces the last theme of O1. Romero presents this musical ideas as a duet between the two saxophones.

To conclude the first part of the piece, the saxophone quartet inserts an eight-bar closing section from mm. 49-56. The thematic material here is based on ascending and descending one-bar patterns of sixteen-notes and maintains the same harmonic progression of O1(Example 4.12). An element to highlight in this section is the rhythmic interplay between the woodwinds and the strings; together they recall the melody of the first theme. Next to this closing section begins a 16-measure transition that occurs from measures 57- 72. In this transition, Romero interrupts the harmonic progression of O1 and draws attention to the harp as a soloist. It displays thematic material based on ascending and descending groups of sixteen-notes. The accompaniment during the first eight bars of the transition is dominated by homorhythmic block chords in the string section. During the final eight bars of the transition, Romero varies the accompaniment to

a polyrhythmic dialogue between the string section and the saxophone quartet. At the same time, the oboe and trumpet insert new thematic material (Example 4.14).



Example 4.14. *Saxomania*. Movement III, Final Theme of Transition Section, oboe and trumpet parts, mm. 69-72

The string section introduces a second *ostinato* (O2) in mm. 73-74 (Example 4.15). The composer reiterates this two-measure rhythmic motive in mm. 75-76, creating a four-measure unit. Next, Romero repeats the four-measure unit three times, creating a twelve-measure period (mm. 73-84). During the presentation of this period, the composer does not introduce any thematic material or changes in instrumentation. Romero uses the twelve-measure segment a total of three times, creating the second section of the movement (mm. 73-108). Each twelve-measure fragment follows a fixed harmonic progression of sixteen chords, which the composer uses to present the thematic material (Example 4.16).

Between mm. 85 and 96, the saxophones introduce a first theme based mainly on ascending and descending groups of sixteenth notes presented in a homorhythmic texture. Romero divides this theme into three segments of four measures each, which exhibit minor variations among them. Meanwhile, the woodwind section takes O2, while the string section, bass clarinet, and bassoon play a harmonic background based on a quarter-note and dotted-half note pattern. Then, between mm. 97 and 108, Romero introduces a second group of three themes, which he also divides into three segments of four

measures. However, this second group features more prominent differences. In mm. 97-100 Romero presents the first theme of the second group in the form of imitation

The image displays a musical score for five string instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The score covers measures 97 to 100. Each instrument part is written on a five-line staff. The Violin I and Violin II staves are in treble clef, while the Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass staves are in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The score shows a rhythmic imitation pattern. In measure 97, each instrument plays a quarter note, an eighth note, and a sixteenth note, followed by a quarter rest. This pattern is repeated in the subsequent measures. The dynamics are marked 'mp' (mezzo-piano) for each instrument.

Example 4.15. *Saxomanía*. Movement III, Ostinato 2 (O2), mm. 73-74

between the saxophone quartet and woodwind sections. The saxophones begin the theme on the downbeat of m. 97 with four sixteen-notes follow by a $\text{♩}.$. The woodwinds perform the motive almost in identical repetition, but starting on the third beat of the measure; this procedure continues until m. 100. At that point, O2 passes from the woodwinds to the horn section, while the strings are divided in three different layers of rhythmic activity. From m. 101 until m. 104 Romero stops the imitation to introduce the second theme in the woodwinds. This theme recalls the melodic shape of the musical idea introduced by the first violins in mm. 17-20 (Example 4.13). During this segment (mm. 101-104), the horn section continues playing O2, the saxophones perform sixteenth-note passages in a homorhythmic texture, and the strings keep playing the three-layer rhythmic counterpoint they started in m. 97.

Example 4.16. *Saxomania*. Movement III, Harmonic Progression O2 mm.73-108

To conclude the second part of the movement (mm. 105-108), the woodwinds recall the thematic material that Romero used during the final four measures of the transition section (see Example 4.14, but now transposed a fifth higher). At the same time, the saxophones accompany this theme with figures based mainly on sixteenth notes (Example 4.17), while the horn section keeps playing O2, and the strings continue the rhythmic counterpoint they started in m. 97.

Example 4.17. *Saxomania*. Movement III, Saxophone Section Accompaniment, mm.73-108

Between bars 109 and 118, Romero inserts the coda. The thematic material displayed during the first four measures of this section uses passages of sixteenth notes distributed between the strings and saxophones quartet. In the next four measures (mm.113-116), Romero intensifies the rhythmic activity by recalling O2 in the brass section. He also uses sixteenth-notes passages in a homorhythmic texture in the saxophones, along with long held sounds in the woodwinds and low strings (violas, cellos, basses) and quarter-notes in the violins. The movement concludes in m. 118 with a big unison on the note E^b, played by the low woodwinds, brass, saxophones, strings, and piano.

Section	Intro.	O1			
Theme		M1	M2	M3	closing section
Key: Ebm	i				
Measure	1 - 8	17 - 24	33 - 40	41 - 48	49 - 56

Table 4.5. Movement III— Introduction and O1—Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes, mm. 1-56.

Section	Transition	
Theme	M1	M2
Key: Ab	i	
Measure	57 - 64	65 - 72

Table 4.6. Movement III— Transition—Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes, mm. 57-72.

Section	O2									
Theme										
Key: Fm			M1		M2		M3		M4	
Measure	73	84	85	96	97	100	101	104	105	108

Table 4.7. Movement III— O2—Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes, mm. 73-108.

Section	Coda	
Theme	M1	M2
Key: Eb	I	
Measure	109 112	113 118

Table 4.8. *Saxomanía*. Movement III—Coda—Formal, Thematic, and Harmonic Schemes mm. 109-118.

Romero's compositional style in *Saxomanía* relies heavily on techniques of motivic development, rhythmic ostinatos, and fixed harmonic sequences. The composer presents his motives within binary units of 2, 4, 8, or 12 measures. Rhythmic ostinatos play an important role in Romero's work, and he uses them structurally within his music. Romero's use of harmony adheres to the tonal system; however, he does expand upon conventional harmonic structures by incorporating upper chordal extensions. In this work, Romero draws upon his typical practice of including traditional rhythms from Venezuela: in this case, the *merengue caraqueño* in the first movement. His orchestral scoring and treatment of the saxophone generally follow standard practices, and avoid the use of the altissimo register and other extended techniques.

Conclusions

Romero's concert music for saxophone relates to a personal process of constant musical expansion and creative evolution in the life of the composer. His experience with the instrument followed a distinctive series of stages that trace the composer's musical life. In his beginnings as an arranger for Latin bands, Romero conceived of the saxophone as a sectional instrument, similar to way it was used in big band jazz. As his skills as an arranger grew more sophisticated, he developed a style that involved a new musical ensemble: the salon orchestra. By this time, Romero had discovered the special lyrical capabilities of the saxophone and featured the instrument as a soloist in his "Dinner in" series. Then, influenced by the Brazilian *bossa nova* and Argentine *nuevo tango*, Romero developed his own urbanized version of the *joropo*. Thus, in the early part of the 1970s, Romero included the tenor saxophone as part of the ensemble he used in his first attempt to launch the *onda nueva* movement. Following this musical expansion, Romero wrote his first concert piece for the instrument, *Cuarteto latinoamericano para saxofones* (1976). The composition of this quartet coincided with a prolific first period of his symphonic works. From that same year came major compositions such as *An American Collage*; Suite for Strings (which included *Fuga con pajarillo*) and the *Suite para cello y piano*. During the following twenty years (1977-1997), Romero did not write any more pieces for the saxophone; instead he composed eight of his nine concert works for the instrument between 1997 and 2005.

By 1997, when Romero moved to La Quinta Tancha (a house in the outskirts of Caracas), he began the most prolific period of classical composition that reached approximately eighty opuses in a span of ten years. Coincidence or not, this important period started with the composer's *Preludio y quirpa* for saxophone quartet (1997).⁵³ He later continued to broaden his musical boundaries with his *Concerto for Paquito* (1999), a piece for saxophone soloist and symphonic orchestra that was dedicated to his close friend, Paquito D'Rivera. He then wrote his last composition for the saxophone and large ensemble, *Saxomanía* (2000). After this massive work, he composed two other pieces for the instrument that have not yet been premiered: his *Gurrufío en onda nueva* (2002) and *Quirpa con variaciones* (2003).⁵⁴ As a final work for the saxophone, Romero re-arranged his *Fuga con pajarillo* (2005) for an ensemble of twelve saxophones.

As this paper has shown, Romero's saxophone music encompasses a total of nine compositions that can be grouped into three categories: 1) works that feature the saxophone as a soloist, 2) pieces that include one or more saxophones within orchestral ensembles, and 3) compositions for the saxophone ensemble itself. As a whole, Romero's writing for the instrument exhibits a thorough knowledge of the expressive qualities of the saxophone family, especially the *cantabile* capabilities of the soprano saxophone and the robust sound of the baritone, which the composer used mainly as bass line but also at times as a melodic instrument. In his works for saxophone Romero treated the instrument as a suitable vehicle to communicate a musical aesthetic that mediated between his own

⁵³ This work engendered a lasting relationship between the composer and the Italian saxophone Quartet Accademia. It resulted from Romero's frequent trips to Italy where his publisher is based.

⁵⁴ Since the time this document was approved by the committee, a premiere of the *Quirpa con variaciones* took place at the University of Miami on April 5, 2013, with the Frost Saxophone Quartet.

cultural background and the world that surrounded him. Furthermore, he used the instrument to highlight his notion that no barriers between classical and popular music should exist.

Romero's understanding of traditional Venezuelan music and his keen perception of classical styles and forms allowed him to move freely between the popular and the academic and vice versa. It allowed him to connect the local with the global, as well as to assimilate international elements within traditional Venezuelan music. Works such as his *Preludio y quirpa* and *Fuga con pajarillo* clearly exhibit this aspect of his music. In his own writings about the *joropo*, the composer revealed a special affection for the *quirpa* and the *pajarillo*—both musical styles that he used extensively in his saxophone compositions.

An important highlight of Romero's compositional style is its rhythmic richness. The rhythmic structures he uses in many of his concert works draw upon *joropo* music. As primary material for these pieces, he utilizes the *a tiempo* and *a contratiempo* rhythmic schemes, as well as derivations of the *cuatro* patterns. The combination of these elements play a key role in the rhythmic aspect of his compositions. Indeed, the *joropo* forms the basis of Romero's compositional style—a concept he applies to both popular and symphonic compositions.

In addition to the *joropo*, Romero introduces another traditional Venezuelan rhythm within his concert works. As described in Chapter IV, Romero includes his own version of the Venezuelan *merengue* in the first movement of *Saxomanía*. Overall, this composition is one of the best examples of the hybridization process inherent in

Romero's saxophone music. The results of the analysis of this work reveal five characteristic features that may also be applied more broadly to his concert music:

1. Use of classical forms. Romero cast his diverse musical ideas within the traditional structures of concert music. For example, the first movement of *Saxomanía* exhibits a sonata form. Typically, the composer modifies the underlying harmonic structure of this classical design. One common difference involves his modification of the tonal centers associated with the traditional form. Here Romero goes from the tonic (I) in P1 to a major tonality based on the leading-tone (VII) in S1, instead of the dominant (V). Romero maintains the tonal area of VII in the recapitulation, only to return to the tonic (I) in the coda. Another difference in his treatment of the form is that he uses a shortened recapitulation that eliminates P1 and goes directly to S1.

2. Motivic development. A common characteristic of Romero's music is the persistent elaboration of motives. In *Saxomanía*, this is an important factor throughout the entire work. His musical phrases are usually divided into segments of 4, 8, or 12 measures. However, these longer units always result from motivic development. The length of Romero's motives varies from one beat to two measures. The composer constantly introduces new thematic material into his phrases. This occurs habitually every 8 measures, although the "new" material in some way will normally relate back to musical ideas the composer that the composer stated earlier.

3. Fixed cycles of harmonic progression. Romero frames his phrase construction within recurring harmonic progressions. These progressions usually consist of 4, 8, or 12-measure segments that repeat a number of times. Within every repetition, Romero

introduces elements that create variety—a change in instrumentation, a rhythmic variation in the accompaniment, or the introduction of a new motive or theme.

4. Uses of extended tertian sonorities. The harmonic construction of *Saxomanía* is deeply rooted in tonality—an orientation that can be confirmed by listening to the melodic design of the bass part. However, Romero's use of extended tertian sonorities in chords with four or more different parts—an influence derived from his interest in jazz— may give the impression of bitonality.

5. Inclusion of traditional Venezuelan rhythms. Besides the extended use of the *joropo* in many of his saxophone works, Romero integrates another traditional Venezuelan rhythm called *merengue caraqueño* in *Saxomanía*. A characteristic feature that defines this music is a five-note rhythmic pattern which can be heard in the rhythmic construction of the melody. Another characteristic feature of the *merengue caraqueño* is the quadruple subdivision of the dotted eighth-note; this rhythmic grouping creates a type of 4/4 measure within a 6/8 metric scheme. In *Saxomanía*, Romero utilizes this rhythmic superimposition to create complex rhythmic textures.

One remaining question is why Romero created so many saxophone works. This issue grows even more intriguing if one considers that none of these works resulted from a commission. In the course of interviewing Ruby Romero (the composer's daughter) and contacting Federico Pacanins (his biographer), along with many others, I never received a conclusive answer. My personal interpretation is that, like any composer, Romero had something meaningful to say, and he used the saxophone as an ideal vehicle for self-expression in these compositions. Indeed, it is clear that the saxophone figured as a preferred instrument in the composer's sound palette throughout his career.

A further development of the research on this project will involve the analysis, arrangement, and recording of Romero's orchestral, chamber, and popular music. Some of the compositions that I will work with include orchestral pieces such as *Concerto for Paquito* (1999), *Gurrufío en onda nueva* (2001), *Bienmesabes* (2001), *Merengón* (2002), and *Saxomanía* (2000). It could also include chamber works such as his *Cuarteto latinoamericano para saxofones* (1976), *Preludio y quirpa* (1997), *Fuga con pajarillo* (1999, 2005) and *Quirpa con variaciones* (2003), among others. Currently, only three of Romero's saxophone works have been commercially recorded, and it would constitute an important achievement to release some or all of his other seven works on CD.⁵⁵

In the spirit of exchange, I offer the information presented in this essay as an invitation to others to explore the artistic production of this extraordinary Venezuelan composer—a figure who contributed richly to Latin American popular and concert music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

⁵⁵ These recordings include the *Cuarteto latinoamericano para saxofones* (1976), *Preludio y quirpa* (1997), *Fuga con pajarillo* (1999), all of which were recorded by the Italian Saxophone Quartet Accademia.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Articles

- Holston, Mark. "Viva Venezuela!" *Americas* 59, no. 5 (September, 2007): 56-7.
- . "From Old School to New Wave." *Americas* 52, no. 2 (March, 2000): 60.

Books

- Dolezol, Theodor and Aldemaro Romero. *El libro del universo*. Barcelona: Jaimes Libro, 1976.
- Gee, Harry R. *Saxophone Soloists and their Music, 1844-1985: An Annotated Bibliography*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.
- Hippolyte Ortega, Nelson. *Entrevistas malandras*. Caracas: Grijalbo, 2010.
- Londeix, Jean-Marie. *A Comprehensive Guide to the Saxophone Repertoire, 1844-2003*. Cherry Hill, NJ.: Northeastern Music Publications, 2003.
- Pacanins, Federico. *Conversaciones con Aldemaro Romero*. Caracas: Fundación para la Cultura Urbana, 2006.
- Pacanins, Federico. *Aldemaro Romero: (1928-2007)*. Biblioteca Biográfica Venezolana. Vol. 109. Caracas: Editora El Nacional, 2009.
- Paulo, Joaquim, Julius Wiedemann, and Bob Ciano. *Jazz Covers*. Los Angeles: Taschen, 2008.
- Ramón y Rivera, Luis Felipe. *El joropo, baile nacional de Venezuela*. Caracas: Ministerio de Educación, Dirección de Cultura y Bellas Artes, 1953.
- Romero, Aldemaro. *Encuentros con la gente*. Caracas: Fundación para la Cultura Urbana, 2007.
- . *El joropo llanero y el joropo central*. Caracas: SACVEN, 2004.
- . *Esta es una orquesta*. Caracas: Fundarte, Alcaldía de Caracas, 1991.
- Villafruela, Miguel. *El saxofón en la música docta de América Latina: el rol de los saxofonistas y de las instituciones de enseñanza en la creación musical para el instrumento*. Santiago de Chile: Universidad de Chile, 2007.

Encyclopedias and Dictionaries

Balderston, Daniel, Mike Gonzalez, and Ana M. López. *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Latin American and Caribbean Cultures*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Peñín, Jose and Walter Guido. *Enciclopedia de la música en Venezuela*. Caracas: Fundación Bigott, 1998.

Salazar, Rafael. *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana*. Madrid: Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 1999.

Internet

Greenberg, Roger. "Latin American Music for Saxophone." The North America Saxophone Alliance. <http://www.saxalliance.org/latin.html> (accessed September 27, 2012).

Villafruela, Miguel. "Saxofón latinoamericano". Miguel Villafruela. <http://saxofonlatino.cl/> (accessed September 27, 2012).

Primary sources

Romero, Aldemaro. *Concerto for Paquito*, manuscript. Aldemaro Romero Archive, Special Collections, University of Miami. Miami, FL.

———. *Cuarteto latinoamericano para saxofones*, manuscript. Aldemaro Romero Archive, Special Collections, University of Miami. Miami, FL.

———. *Fuga con pajarillo*, manuscript. Aldemaro Romero Archive, Special Collections, University of Miami. Miami, FL.

———. *Gurrufío en onda nueva*, manuscript. Aldemaro Romero Archive, Special Collections, University of Miami. Miami, FL.

———. *Preludio y quirpa*, manuscript. Aldemaro Romero Archive, Special Collections, University of Miami. Miami, FL.

———. *Quirpa con variaciones*, manuscript. Aldemaro Romero Archive, Special Collections, University of Miami. Miami, FL.

———. *Saxomanía*, manuscript. Aldemaro Romero Archive, Special Collections, University of Miami. Miami, FL.

Newspapers clippings (folders I-IV). Aldemaro Romero Archive, Special Collections, University of Miami. Miami, Fl.

Sound recordings

'Round mid ... jazz. Sassofoni Accademia Quartet. Dynamic. CDS262, 2000.
<http://iiiprxy.library.miami.edu:2744/catalogue/item.asp?cid=CDS262> (accessed 08/27/2012).

Allegro Scherzando: Music for Saxophone Quartet. Sassofoni Accademia Quartet. Dynamic. CDS188, 1998.
<http://iiiprxy.library.miami.edu:2744/catalogue/item.asp?cid=CDS188> (accessed 08/27/2012).