

TOWARD A REDEFINITION OF MUSICAL LEARNING IN THE
SAXOPHONE STUDIOS OF ARGENTINA

A Monograph

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Abstract

The academic teaching of saxophone in Argentina is a recent activity compared with the teaching of others instruments. The curricula have been modeled in European schools, covering exclusively classical music and, therefore, setting aside the particularities Argentine society express through its own music. Composers have written several works for saxophone including local elements, such as folkloric rhythms and tango language; but the students in the academy are not able to learn them in a methodical manner. The aim of this research is to bring to the surface the gap between what is taught in the saxophone classrooms and what the Argentine society produce and consume in musical terms. As a solution, the author exposes that the inclusion in the academy of some techniques popular musicians use, along with the inclusion of popular elements Argentine society produce, should bring closer to the academy what is musically happening in the real life world.

Introduction

In Argentina, formal saxophone teaching in academies and conservatories is relatively new. The first studio of classical saxophone was opened around 1975. Subsequently, the increasing presence of professional classical saxophonists also encouraged native composers to use the instrument for their works. Nowadays, Argentina is one of the countries with more pieces originally written for saxophone compared to other countries in Latin America.¹ Although these pieces incorporate elements from indigenous Argentinian folk music, teachers of the instrument have not incorporated them into the curricula of the academies.

My experiences as a classical saxophonist, including learning, teaching, and performing in my native country of Argentina, allow me to see the permanent influence of popular music in the academic, or classical, realm. This constant intercrossing of styles is present in many Argentinian saxophone pieces that have begun to be taught in the conservatories, where music education has been largely modeled on the European “classical” musical tradition.² This particular interaction of the popular and classical styles in Latin American countries has been stated by Bruno Nettl, “The point is that the line between Western and non-Western music, . . . is in fact often quite blurred--and probably nowhere so much as in Latin America.”³ The notable presence of popular music elements in classical saxophone writing raises the problem of how popular music

¹ To expand this information go to the web page of Dr. Miguel Villafruela: <http://saxofonlatino.cl> (accessed October 18, 2013). Also, see Miguel Villafruelas’ book: *El Saxofón en la Música Docta de América Latina* (Santiago de Chile: Universidad de Chile, 2007).

² In the case of saxophone, the curricula mostly includes pieces of the twentieth century from the French school, and is principally modeled on the curricula of the Paris Conservatoire saxophone studio.

³ Bruno Nettl, *The Western Impact on World Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1985), 22.

elements are taught in a largely European classical pedagogical tradition that typically eschews popular music influences.

My work will demonstrate how elements from popular music are present in pieces written for classical saxophone, and how, in some cases, these elements blend with the classical elements also present. I will show how the result is a particular musical outcome that deserves special and new consideration. This new perspective could be incorporated into the music curricula of the institutions where saxophone is taught.

If the aim of music education institutions is to create musicians capable of developing a professional career in their societies, these institutions must consider the particularities of those societies. John Blacking helps to clarify this concept, “We must recognize that no musical style has ‘its own terms’: its terms are the terms of its society and culture, and of the body of the human beings who listen to it, and create and perform it.”⁴

Thoughts about the actual situation in music conservatoires can be seen in the words of the Director of Creative Learning for the Barbican Centre and Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London, composer Sean Gregory,⁵

The new concept of ‘all-round’ musician who performs traditional and commissioned repertoire, who improvises freely and within collectively composed frameworks, collaborates with other artists, draws on non-European influences and embraces technology will be relatively uncharted territory for some, particularly for those in the conservatoire sector The challenge of such realigning of priorities and shifting perspectives can be seen as undermining the foundations of what people already are as performers, composers and teachers; yet ‘edge culture’ and the interrelationship between ‘vertical’ and horizontal heritage confront us, challenging us to recognize new paradigms, thereby providing a possible way into a creative future within an open society. The

⁴ John Blacking, “On Musical Behaviour,” in *Music, Culture, and Society: a Reader*, ed. Derek B. Scott (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 98.

⁵ More about Sean Gregory in http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/about_the_school/staff/senior_staff/department/36-senior-staff/614-sean-gregory (accessed October 20, 2013).

unquestioning allegiance to a singular ‘tribal’ practice continues to be the main obstacle to evolution in arts institutions today.⁶

According to Gregory, the conflict between cultural expressions in society and conservatory curricula is an issue to address in other countries around the world.

Gregory’s thoughts are applicable to the problem found in Argentinian saxophone pieces, and is also evident in how these concepts could be expanded to other instruments and, even further, to the whole musical educational system of the conservatories. In the United Kingdom (Gregory’s native country), as well as in Argentina, music education should be revised in order to achieve flexibility for the professional musical life. The rigidity of the music teaching at academies significantly contrasts with the demands of contemporary society.

Argentina, while considered one of the most developed countries in Latin America, shares with the rest of the countries particular cultural components that create a common identity. One of its characteristics is the permanent interaction between the popular and the academic spheres. Néstor García Canclini asserts the following about Latin American societies, “The hybrid sociability that contemporary cities induce leads us to participate intermittently in groups that are cultured and popular, traditional and modern.”⁷

The purpose of this research is to ponder the necessity of changes in the way we understand, learn and perform music in Argentina, based on the influence of popular music found in many Argentine classical saxophone pieces. Additionally the aim is to

⁶ Sean Gregory, “Creativity and Conservatoires: the Agenda and the Issue,” in *The Reflective Conservatory*, ed. George Odam and Nicholas Bannan (London: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), 21-22.

⁷ Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 266.

show how Argentine musical training has been built in the European-Western tradition, setting aside the local society's unique musical characteristics. In this sense, my research could help Argentinians better understand their musical identity, therefore, they may be better equipped to know what to change and how to contribute to the world a more original musical style. Moreover, it could be useful to elaborate better programs of study for the classical saxophone, which can be used as models for other instruments. Finally, the result could be a birth of a new pedagogical plan that includes elements related to our proper Argentinian idiosyncrasies.

My research started with three Argentinian pieces for saxophone: *Niebla y Cemento* (Fog and Cement, 1993) by Mario Herrerías, *Sonata for Saxophone and Piano* (1995) by Fernando Lerman, and *La Conspicua* (2006) by Rolando Budini. These works are intriguing because they exemplify the basic premise of this work; the presence of popular elements in Argentine music. These pieces have been performed more often than others and, in the case of Herrerías's and Lerman's pieces, they have even been recorded by recognized performers. Jazz artist Paquito D' Rivera recorded Herrerías's piece, while María Noel Luzardo, saxophone professor at the National Conservatory in Buenos Aires, Argentina, recorded Lerman's piece.⁸ Although there are no commercial recordings of Budini's piece, many saxophone quartets such as *4mil* from Argentina and the *Pannonica Quartet* from Colombia have performed it. In the case of *4mil* quartet, the director of the group, Emiliano Barri, personally told me that the effect the piece had on the jury of the

⁸ Information about these albums can be found in the following websites: http://www.paquitosrecords.com/Paquitosrecords/INFO_OWN_ALBUMS.html, for D' Rivera's album; and <http://www.eldorado.org.ar/Discos /chmusicforsax.htm>, for Luzardo's.

Argentinian national chamber music festival *Música en Plural-Cultura Nación* was decisive to win the first prize of the contest.⁹

My analysis will list the popular music elements contained in these pieces. I will apply the analytical style used by Dr. Liesa Karen Norman in her thesis “The Respective Influence of Jazz and Classical Music on Each Other, The Evolution of Third Stream and Fusion and The Effect Thereof Into the 21st Century”¹⁰ Dr. Norman explains the different elements used (such as rhythm, harmony, form, improvisation, and other elements) and then analyze their presence in specific pieces. In this regard, I observed that the most significant element representing each style (classical and popular) is rhythm.

Since this inquiry has sociological implications, I found it necessary to investigate and understand the social context in which the pieces were composed, basically to observe how the cultural process of Argentinian society influenced the composers and in which way this influence is reflected in the pieces. I will also trace the development of classical saxophone in the Argentinian music academies, listing those studios that are most representative of the country and how they were established and developed. Additionally, I will demonstrate the level of incorporation of Argentinian musical elements in these studios. Finally, I will observe possible solutions, adding what others scholars have found to integrate music produced in the real world with what the academies are teaching.

⁹ To see a performance of the piece *La Conspicua* by *4mil* go to the website <https://myspace.com/cuartetosaxos4mil/music/song/la-conspicua-r.-budini-56732696-61602317> (accessed October 23, 2013).

¹⁰ Liesa Karen Norman, “The Respective Influence of Jazz and Classical Music on Each Other, The Evolution of Third Stream and Fusion and The Effect Thereof Into the 21st Century” (PhD diss., The University of British Columbia, 2002).

Social Context: The Conquest and its Cultural Consequence

Around the year 1490, the indigenous peoples of all America were organized, as George Foster says in his book *Culture and Conquest*, in “highly developed civilizations with urban and peasant components.”¹¹ The cultural behaviors that societies expressed were rich and full of symbolic meanings. In this sense they were equally complex as the Old World civilization, and the development of American traditions had all the characteristics of a self-determining society. Foster continues,

This tradition had culminated, in Meso-America, in high civilizations based on agricultural and trading economies, with craft specialization, large cities, monumental architecture, elaborate politico-religious organizations, and dense populations. Soft metals were worked, writing was being developed, and the idea of the wheel was present in toys.¹²

In these words, Foster shows the degree of development in the lands of the indigenous people in America before the Spaniards arrived in 1492. Later, he compares this development with the one found in Spain around the same time. Spain was organized by regions that showed small cultural particularities but, at the same time, had for many years shared the same traditional roots. Foster also expands this information telling us that:

Six centuries of Roman domination gave the peninsula a common language, unified political control, widespread urbanization, and other forms and values of Rome. The subsequent Moorish invasion brought Greco-Roman learning of antiquity, as well as notable original contributions in such fields as agriculture, medicine, mathematics, and other forms of science. Finally, with the slow Christian reconquest, the peninsula was again brought within the orbit of Western European culture. No fifteenth-century Old World cultural tradition was richer than that of the Iberian Peninsula.¹³

¹¹ George M. Foster, *Culture and Conquest: America's Spanish Heritage* (New York: Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Incorporated, 1960), 1.

¹² Foster, *Culture and Conquest: America's Spanish Heritage*, 1.

¹³ Foster, *Culture and Conquest: America's Spanish Heritage*, 1.

Once the Spanish people arrived in the New World, big cultural changes transformed the lives of the natives and of the Spaniards who arrived subsequently. From the south in Argentina to the north in Mexico, most of the indigenous people were forced to readapt their way of life; their culture was suddenly turned into a new one. According to George Foster “ . . . as many as 150,000 Spaniards of all social classes and occupations (Friede 1952) had swarmed over America, mixing racially and culturally with the conquered native peoples and setting in motion the historical processes that subsequently produced the contemporary hybrid civilization of Spanish America . . . ”¹⁴ The concept of hybridization Foster mentions has been deeply studied by the contemporary sociologist Nestor García Canclini, it provides a framework for my discussion of current Latin America culture, and it will be deeper discussed later.

The process of integration of the Spanish people was rapid and well settled in most of the regions; at this time, the Spaniards created more rigid forms of organization in the new lands, a process that is understood as a crystallization. This result created what Foster explains as, “ . . . the new Spanish American colonial cultures appear to have become more resistant to continuing Spanish influences.”¹⁵ Foster describes this process of crystallization as a pre-movement of independence, where elements that were previously accepted and assimilated from the Spanish culture as natural are now recognized less as proper and viewed more as foreign.

Foster concludes,

If the concept of cultural crystallization is valid, it is clear that the common anthropological emphasis on social and psychological phenomena to explain acceptance or rejection of new elements by a subordinate people can never fully explain what takes place in an acculturation situation. The time sequence of

¹⁴ Foster, *Culture and Conquest: America's Spanish Heritage*, 2.

¹⁵ Foster, *Culture and Conquest: America's Spanish Heritage*, 233.

formation and presentation of conquest culture plays an equally important role in determining the final selection of imported traits by native and colonial cultures. The sociopsychological reasons for acceptance and rejection can never be fully understood until they are placed in the perspective of time sequence and until it is recognized that new hybrid and drastically altered native cultures must make rapid decisions and then abide by most of these decisions, if they are to endure.¹⁶

Foster believes that the process of hybridization takes a certain amount of time and is heavily dependent on the ‘decisions’ made by the native cultures with respect to the acceptance or rejection of the new elements. This is a process that has taken many years and is manifest even in modern times. The position I take about European elements in our culture, most specifically the teaching of music in conservatories, is framed by this idea of acceptance and rejection through the passage of time, a vivid process that goes on still today.

¹⁶ Foster, *Culture and Conquest: America's Spanish Heritage*, 234.

Social Context Today

A discussion of the academic saxophone and the Argentine culture brings to the surface a unique reality. The development of the saxophone in academic realms in Argentina has particular social connotations.

Geographically, Argentina is bordered by other Latin American countries and shares with them some particularities. In most of these countries, society has been formed from different cultural roots that eventually have been intercrossed, creating a singular cultural outcome with specific characteristics. The sociologist Nestor Canclini expands this concept with “Latin American countries are currently the result of the sedimentation, juxtaposition and interweaving of indigenous traditions (above all in the Mesoamerican and Andean areas), of Catholic colonial hispanism, and of modern political, educational, and communicational actions.”¹⁷

The hybrid characteristic is reflected in the musical field as a constant blending of different musical styles. This blending does not present itself as a unified musical language; rather, it appears as a spontaneous expression of the musicians. In the academy, European classical music is taught, but the musicians want to play Argentine tango, Latin American folklore and North American jazz.

The teaching of music in universities in Argentina is focused in the European classical tradition, but every year the students express their desire to learn and play popular styles; particularly, the students of saxophone feel attracted by the jazz style. Canclini explains how the Latin American societies work in this sense; “The hybrid sociability that contemporary cities induce leads us to participate intermittently in groups

¹⁷ Nestor Garcia Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*, 46.

that are cultured and popular, traditional and modern.”¹⁸ In these words, Canclini expresses how the hybridization of the society works in the cultural field; the participation of the artists in different spheres is particularly prominent in this kind of society.

The professional saxophonist must master the different styles and create a power of adaptability that still in most cases is not taught by the Universities. Garcia Canclini continues explaining how the different social forces struggle to avoid hybridization,

In any case, the growing interaction between the cultured, the popular and the massive softens up the borders between their practitioners and their styles. But this trend struggles against the centripetal movement of each field, where those who hold power based on rhetoric and specific forms of dramatizing prestige assume that their strength depends on preserving differences. The breaking down of the thin walls that separate them is experienced by those who hegemonize each field as a threat to their power. Therefore, the current reorganization of culture is not a linear process. On one side, the need to expand cultural markets popularizes elite goods and introduces mass messages into the enlightened sphere. Nevertheless, the struggle for control of the cultured and the popular continues to be waged, in part, through efforts to defend specific symbolic capital and mark the distinction between themselves and others.¹⁹

Being an instrumentalist in Latin America has a special meaning; the proper social components of their own reality are mixed with other components such as those relating to learning a European musical tradition, a tradition that was born and developed in those lands and bequeathed as universal. Again Canclini states, "This manner of adopting foreign ideas with an inappropriate meaning is at the basis of the majority of our literature and our art . . .”²⁰

While Argentina is and has been a land of great musical performers, it is difficult (but not impossible) for many others to achieve a career that will be valued and allows

¹⁸ Nestor Garcia Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*, 266.

¹⁹ Nestor Garcia Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*, 271.

²⁰ Nestor Garcia Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*, 49.

the development of a personal art. It is especially difficult in a society that adopts certain European social values but avoids those related to culture and art in terms of societal support. Neither government plans, nor those who lead Argentine society assign sufficient importance to culture and art. In comparison with other European social models, these values should be manifest in works, educational projects, budget, etc.

As stated earlier, Argentina is part of the Latin American culture, which, according to García Canclini, is impregnated with its “hybrid” character. The academic realm is mixed with the popular one with more vigor than in other regions around the world. Its permanent interaction is part of everyday life, and this feature has its immediate mirror in the work of its artists. The sociologist gives us a clear idea about how Latin American societies are culturally structured. The mixture is not a dispersion of identities but rather it is the unified identity that characterizes those countries. With this concept of hybridization, the Latin American countries recover the notion of unique identity that was stolen when the Conquistadors arrived in their lands. The mixture is the ultimate outcome that unifies the different cultural factors working in the region.

The influence of popular styles is clearly evident in the three “academic” pieces for saxophone chosen for this paper, as recalled by their composers. All three were written in a time span of 13 years, 1993 for *Niebla y Cemento*, 1995 for *Sonata*, and 2006 for *La Conspicua*. This is a common feature of a generation of composers, trained with a Western-European music education but at the same time searching for an identity that expresses their own reality, different from the European one.

If music and art in general present these characteristics, and our societies are structured in this manner, why we do not learn music according to this? Why do we still

have to pass several years in the conservatory only learning and playing European music? What could be the solution, what should we change? In the interview with the composer Fernando Lerman,²¹ he pointed to a similar dilemma speaking about how he thinks his pieces, and other pieces with the same characteristics, must be played. He spoke about “Swing,” to define the popular elements that should be presented in the performance of his *Sonata*. In this case, the word “Swing” represents not jazz rhythms, but all that an academic-classical piece with popular elements must present different from a standard academic-classical “pure” piece.

Should a “classical” musician be trained also in popular music? If yes, in what way? According to Lerman, the solution could be to expose classical musicians to popular music, in order for the academically trained performers to absorb the particular characteristics of popular music. He also spoke about how a classical musician could copy some of the elements, as the sound colors, articulations, and phrasing, in order to assimilate and incorporate them into the piece in a more natural manner. Although the concept of copy/assimilation/re-creation is the standard process used by popular musicians, classically trained musicians have little or no experience with this approach.

At the end of this chapter I will address a question Sean Gregory asks in his excellent article “Creativity and Conservatoires: the Agenda and the Issue.” The question is: “Can and should establishments for higher-education training in music, especially conservatoires, develop reputations as centers of excellence for new ideas and approaches as well as for the preservation of our musical tradition?”²² He gives us a ray of hope when he asserts, “The most progressive conservatoires provide a learning environment

²¹ Fernando Lerman, interviewed by the author, Buenos Aires, 2005.

²² Sean Gregory, “Creativity and Conservatoires,” 19.

that connects tradition with innovation, and encourages the widest possible access without compromising its reputation.”²³

After these words we can postulate that today’s “progressive conservatoire” must become in the near future the “regular conservatoire,” which could be able to represent the diversity of musical production in modern societies. This concept perfectly fits in Argentinian society, where music education should be redefined with respect to the current trends, but also with respect to its history and idiosyncrasy. European tradition has been the base in which our societies and cultures have grown; today it is necessary to recognize our identity as a more mature and self-sufficient community.

²³ Sean Gregory, “Creativity and Conservatoires,” 20.

Argentinian Trends

Basically, traditional popular music in Argentina is divided between tango and folklore, depending on the region where the music comes from. Tango arose and developed in Buenos Aires, the capital city, while folklore is more associated with music from the other provinces (commonly called in Argentina the “inside”), especially from the center and north of the country.²⁴

Regarding the conception of folklore in Argentina, it is useful to explore the beginning of the mixing of Spanish music with the indigenous ones. Western musical traditions came to the new continent with the arrival of the Europeans to America in the fifteenth century. Argentina was mostly influenced by Spanish culture, and the local indigenous people assimilated some dances as fandango, bolero, seguidilla and jota. By the nineteenth century, some musical characteristics from both cultures began to crystalize in a proper Argentine folk language.²⁵

The first contacts Spanish people made with indigenous people in South America were not only aimed at conquering them but also to spread Spanish religion and culture. In this way, native people started to assimilate Spanish music, and they were trained principally to provide music for church services. At the same time, the Spanish adapted some indigenous tunes to fit in their evangelistic messages.

²⁴ To know more about Argentinian Music, see: Nick Rossi, “Music of Argentina,” *Music Educators Journal* 59, no. 5(January 1973): 51-53.
<http://www.jstor.org.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/stable/pdfplus/3394247.pdf?acceptTC=true> (accessed November 19, 2011).

²⁵ This paragraph and the next two, were written based on the information found in: Whyte Roy, “Argentine Folk Elements in the Solo Piano Works of Alberto Ginastera” (Doctoral Research Project, University of Texas at Austin, 1986), 12.

The role of natives in the church ranged from singing to playing instruments, and the adaptation was so great that musical results were of the best quality. In this manner, the adaptability of the natives allowed European music to spread rapidly through the new land; the compositional techniques as well the orchestration and the use of European instruments started to modify the musical culture in America.

Although the church was the main conduit for missionaries to spread the new music, other social activities relating to music were also important in the mixture of both cultures. As Albert Luper states in his book, *The Music of Argentina*,

Along with the flourishing of religious music in the colony there was present as well the practice of secular music among all the layers of society, the Indians with their native instruments and folk songs; the soldiers, sailors, farmers, merchants, miners, and craftsmen from Spain and their descendants, with the guitar and folk music derived from the various regions in the mother country: and the court representatives and other members of the aristocracy who patronized both the artistic and the popular and folk music.²⁶

Reinforcing these concepts, we have the words of Bruno Nettl, who states:

Of the plethora of folk and popular songs and dances of Spanish origin, those that seem to be most widespread were of the more recent style of Spanish folk music. This style was characterized by lively rhythms, polyphony in parallel thirds or sixths, and a predilection for triple meter."²⁷

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the indigenous and European cultures were combining in various ways to produce a wealth of folk songs and dances in Argentina. New dances and songs were evolving and forming the basis upon which later composers would elaborate and take their inspiration for the nationalistic school.²⁸

In the middle part of the nineteenth century, the immigration laws of Argentina were greatly relaxed, which had a pronounced influence on the development of the

²⁶ Albert L. Luper, *The Music of Argentina* (Washington, D.C.: Pan American Union, 1942), 4.

²⁷ Bruno Nettl, *Folk and Traditional Music of the Western Continents* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 190.

²⁸ Whyte Roy, "Argentine Folk Elements in the Solo Piano Works of Alberto Ginastera," 14.

country and on its musical life. This mass migration brought with it a flood of European music, dance and art, especially into Buenos Aires. Toward the end of the century, Buenos Aires became one of the cultural capitals of the New World, providing a site for music of all sorts to grow and prosper.²⁹

The tango, perhaps the most identifiable Argentine music in the world, based on the habanera from Spain and the *milonga* from Argentina, was the music of the port of Buenos Aires that arose around 1900. The port was the place where the mostly Italian immigrants from Europe arrived and where they primary settled. The possibility of sharing their music allowed for a mixture of different musical styles that matured in one synthesis, the tango. The nostalgia of the newcomers is the distinct stamp tango shows in its music and lyrics. Toward 1920, the tango was well established in the rest of the city and began to be well known in the rest of the world.³⁰

The first tangos usually had three parts; rapidly the two-part structure became the fashion after 1915. The second part is in the dominant or relative minor of the main key. The instrumentation changed through the years as well, from trios of violin, guitar and flute before 1900 and trios of piano, violin and *bandoneon* after that year, to large ensembles with four *bandoneons*, string sections of violins, cello and double bass and piano. Around 1940, the typical ensemble added percussion and other instruments that give the orchestra a more ‘modern’ sound. After 1960, Astor Piazzolla also incorporated electric guitar, saxophone and drums in his ensembles, mixing tango music with jazz colors as in his group with jazz saxophonist Gerry Mulligan.

²⁹ Whyte Roy, “Argentine Folk Elements in the Solo Piano Works of Alberto Ginastera,” 17.

³⁰ All the information referred to tango is based on the article: Gerard Béhague, "Tango," *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27473> (accessed October 7, 2013).

Music in the Argentine Republic Today and its Teaching

The impact of the Spanish conquest deeply transformed the Argentine region and started a particular cultural process in its history. Music particularly felt the influence of three large streams: the indigenous, made up of the American natives, the European with the Spanish contribution, and only a bit of African, who arrived as slaves but not in the same number as in other countries of America.³¹

In the vast Argentine territory, cultural roots are linked to different indigenous groups, holders of a rich musical culture, who currently inhabit different regions. The Argentine Republic may be divided into seven geographical-folkloric boundaries (see Figure 1), each with an important local musical tradition expressed in their various communities, as follows:

1- *Noroeste* (northwest) 2- *Chaqueño* (northeast) 3- *Central* (central) 4- *Litoral* or *Mesopotámico* (mesopotamic) 5- *Cuyano* (andean) 6- *Pampeano* (the pampas) 7- *Patagónico* (patagonic)³²

The music of the northwest is recognizable for the use of autochthone wind instruments as well as for the use of a particular string instrument called *charango*, a small guitar with a high register. The most identifiable folkloric rhythms are the *baguala* and *carnavalitos* in the north of the region, and *vidalas* and *chayas* in the south. The *huaino* is a typical Peruvian rhythm that also influences the northwest region of Argentina. In performance, the music consists of a high-pitched voice accompanied with varied instruments including saxophone in some cases.

³¹ Ana Lucia Frega, "Music Education in Argentina," (Paper presented at the UNESCO Regional Meeting of Experts on Arts Education at school level in Latin America and the Caribbean in Brazil, 2001), 5.

³² Frega, "Music Education in Argentina," 6.



Figure 1. Geographical-folkloric boundaries of the Argentine Republic.³³

The northeast region shares some characteristics with the northwest region, but incorporates a rhythm called *chamame*, played with accordion and the guitar. In the central region the rhythm of *chacarera* has grown to the point it has become one of the most important folkloric rhythms in Argentina. The instruments used are the acoustic guitar, a typical cylindrical drum called *bombo*, and in some cases the violin. Another strongly popular rhythm of the region is the *zamba*, which is an important Argentine dance and, as many others, has become an important popular music genre. The andean

³³ Map of the folkloric regions of Argentina, extracted from:
http://www.folkloretradiciones.com.ar/articulos/clases_danzas/ (accessed October 6, 2013).

region has connections with Chile and incorporates rhythms from that country, such as the *cueca*; nevertheless the most characteristic music is the *tonada*, played basically with guitar in duet or solo. The mesopotamic region shares with the northeast region the importance of the *chamame* as the most typical folkloric rhythm; also important are the *rasguido doble*, polka and *rasgueado*. The pampas has the *milonga* as its most important folkloric rhythm, commonly played with a solo singer and guitar. The last region, the patagonic, is strongly connected with the indigenous music of the native *Mapuches*; here the *loncomeo* is a dance accompanied by a singular music that blends indigenous instruments with the Spanish guitar.

Although popular styles are taught in a rudimentary way in high school, not one of them is addressed deeply in the conservatory, unless there is a program in popular music. According to this thought, the Argentine ethnomusicologist Isabel Aretz stated, “The new century opens up a question for Latin American citizens in general: should we continue accepting everything that comes to us from abroad, or should we also universalize our own culture, giving value to that which distinguishes us nationally, in fellowship with the other countries of our continent [?]”³⁴ Aretz’s words express the core of the problem with respect to the way we teach and learn music in Argentina as well.

In 1993, a working team was created to research how these ideas were present in the Argentina Educational System. The aim was to incorporate changes in the new Federal Education Law (Law 24.195). Dr. Ana Lucia Frega directed this Working Team and in the conclusions of their work they stated “... it observed explicit recommendations with reference to the need of regional integration and the strengthening

³⁴ Isabel Aretz, *La investigación etnomusicológica del siglo XX frente al siglo XXI*, quoted in Ana Lucia Frega, “Music Education in Argentina,” (Paper presented at the UNESCO Regional Meeting of Experts on Arts Education at school level in Latin America and the Caribbean in Brazil, 2001), 6.

of the national identity, substantiated by the profound respect for the diversity of local, provincial and regional idiosyncrasies inside the country.”³⁵ It was necessary to modify the Educational Law to bring the topic to the surface, and although this law was created for all educational levels, no change was observed in the way music is taught at the conservatories.

Dr. Frega concludes her thoughts telling us:

Because music is a ‘natural’ medium of communication, general education has the ethical obligation to provide it as a classroom experience for all pupils. Music is a fundamental area in the process of comprehensive education for development. The key word in this process is ‘musicality’. When the affirmation of teaching-learning process of music is conducted on the level of general education, it consists primarily of sensitization to music. Consequently, it is fundamental that this process be conducted in balance harmony [*sic*] with the environment from which it emerges, maintaining contact with the music most familiar to students but with a constant search for values in musical performance. Traditions in this matter are evidently of the greatest importance . . .³⁶

Based on her research, the conclusions were clear about the need to generate a more comprehensive program of study that incorporates the local characteristic of each region in the Argentine territory.

³⁵ Ana Lucia Frega, “Music Education in Argentina,” 6.

³⁶ Ana Lucia Frega, “Music Education in Argentina,” 9.

Representative Saxophone Studios in Argentina

The following saxophone studios represent the lead institutions where the saxophone is taught in Argentina. The cities are the most populated of the country³⁷, and in the case of Cordoba, the oldest saxophone studio in the country, it serves to show how recently the instrument began to be taught in the academy. The Rosario saxophone studio is the only one that incorporates in its teaching the idea of classical and popular styles, closest to the ideal put forth in this paper.

Saxophone Studio at the Provincial Music Conservatory *Felix T. Garzón* of Cordoba

The studio was founded around 1975, the first one in the country. Professor Ariel Ruiz Diaz has been in charge of the studio since 1999. The studio offers the degree of Professor of Saxophone [*Profesor de Saxofón*], which allows the student to acquire not only technical but pedagogical skills. The possibilities for the alumni are centered in the teaching of the instrument at undergraduate levels, although a career as a performer is possible as well.

Some interesting words of Ariel Ruiz Diaz³⁸ are presented below:

Asked about the different saxophone schools adopted in the studio he says, "Personally I'm not very familiar with the American school. I think the French School of Saxophone is very complete and brings the instrument to the same level as any other instrument."

³⁷ To see more about Argentine population go to: http://www.populationlabs.com/Argentina_Population.asp (accessed September 27, 2013).

³⁸ Ariel Ruiz Díaz, interview by author, Gral. Roca, Argentina, March 5, 2005. The original interview is in Spanish, the author has made the English translation.

Regarding his experience abroad:

I think for me personally it has been very rewarding to contact musicians from other places, because I have been allowed to measure my knowledge and enrich its shortcomings. Also, it's great to have cultural and personal exchanges with other musicians. The music scene is different in other countries. The culture is valued differently, contests and concerts have another level. The demands are higher than here in many cases.

Talking about our particular Argentine music he asserts, "Our traditional rhythms are very well valued on the outside of the country, the same happens with our composers. I think it would be very important to show the potential of the saxophone with all its technical possibilities to encourage even more new creations by our composers."

With regard to the development of the classical saxophone in Argentina, he opines, "I think it is more important to generate a higher concept of the instrument rather than an Argentine school of teaching. Before [the opening of the saxophone studios], the saxophone was a 'cool' instrument learned only for popular music, forgetting this is an instrument with thousands of possibilities."

Saxophone Studio at the National Conservatory of Buenos Aires

The National Conservatory in Buenos Aires was one of the first opened academic positions in saxophone in Argentina, founded in 1986. Organizing the studio were the renowned saxophonists Hugo Pierre and Alejandro Gonzalez. According to Maria Noel Luzardo³⁹, Julio Fangers, Director of the National Conservatory, called Hugo Pierre to organize the content of the saxophone program. Because there were no advanced students, a program for the basic cycle (four years) was created, and Professor Carlos Kraemer was finally appointed as the professor.

³⁹ María Noel Luzardo, interview by author, General Roca, Argentina, April 16, 2005. The original interview is in Spanish, the author has made the English translation.

After a few years, students were better prepared and ready to enter a new, more advanced curriculum. The professor in charge to teach those students was Hugo Pierre. The program of study was based on the French school of saxophone, using books such as Druet, Ferling, Bozza, Marcel Mule's books of technique, and other solos and orchestral works.

This initial scheme was maintained for 10 years, at which time the first student, Maria Noel Luzardo, finished the entire course and became the new professor, the first professor with a real degree in saxophone. Emiliano Barri, a former Luzardo student, teaches the studio today.

The course is organized in 2 cycles of study. The first year is considered pre-university, used to evaluate and prepare the student for the complete course. At this point, it is worth mentioning that in Argentina, music education in high school doesn't have the characteristics found in Europe and North America. It is almost impossible that a high-school student could have contact with the saxophone in an educational institution, only in private lessons. For that reason, universities must evaluate, as a first step, what the new students have learned in private lessons in their previous years.

The first cycle is seven years long, including the first pre-university year; the title obtained is National Specialized Professor (*Profesor Nacional Especializado*). The second cycle adds three more years, and the student receives the title of Saxophone Performer (*Licenciatura en Artes Musicales con Orientación en Instrumento*). Currently in all levels, works from the French and the American schools are taught. There is a tendency towards French music, with the inclusion of a few works by Argentine composers.

Saxophone Studio at the University of Rosario

The studio was opened in 1993 and, after two years of organization, the professor in charge was Julio Kobryn⁴⁰. The degree titles are Performer [*Licenciado en Música, Especialidad Saxofón*] or Professor [*Profesor de Música, Especialidad Saxofón*], depending on the choice the student makes at the beginning of the course. The “Professor” degree includes more pedagogical material and can be completed in three years after the two years of the pre-university cycle. The performer degree is five years long after the two years of pre-university cycle.

The program includes works and pedagogical materials that show a different curricular structure than that found in Buenos Aires. The concept is more open and does not subscribe to any particular school; it includes material from French and American schools, as well as jazz pieces and etudes. The idea is that students will have a broader musical education.

Due to the characteristics of professional musical life in Argentina, this wider curriculum favors the future employability of the saxophone students. According to professor Kobryn, it is good that students can deepen a style without ignoring the fundamentals of another, which in this case involves classical and popular music. From a purely technical standpoint Julio Kobryn believes that " . . . a classical base is indispensable . . . I noticed, however, that the orientation of students tends mostly to jazz or folk in general."⁴¹

⁴⁰ Julio Kobryn, interview by author, Gral. Roca, Argentina, March 10, 2005. The original interview is in Spanish, the author has made the English translation.

⁴¹ Julio Kobryn, interview by author.

Pieces and Composers

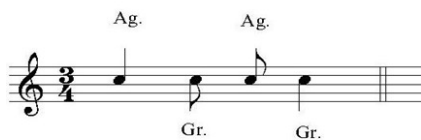
In the following three pieces written for saxophone, the influence of popular rhythms is easily recognized, but other elements of popular genres, such as melodic inflections and harmonies, are also present. Two of the pieces, *La Conspicua* and *Sonata para Saxofón y Piano* are clearly influenced by folklore, while *Niebla y Cemento* shows tango's influences, specifically the new tango of Astor Piazzolla.

In 2006, Rolando Budini wrote *La Conspicua*, a saxophone quartet with folkloric rhythms of *Chacarera*⁴², one of the most representative dances of Argentinian folklore. *Chacarera* is originally from the north region, though it is nowadays extended through the entire country. As the composer asserts in the following words, these folkloric elements are unique and in that way worthy to be studied seriously:

⁴² *Chacarera*: what is greatly interesting about this rhythm is its combination of the measures of $\frac{3}{4}$ and the $\frac{6}{8}$. The polyrhythm created by the high pitches organized in $\frac{6}{8}$ and the low pitches in $\frac{3}{4}$ makes of this Argentinian folkloric rhythm a particular musical genre.

If we consider the $\frac{3}{4}$ metric, in the *chacarera*, different from the classic $\frac{3}{4}$ vals, the first beat is the weakest one, being the second and third stronger with the third beat even stronger and tenuto.

The main instruments used in the *chacarera* are the Spanish guitar and the *bombo* (drum of cylindrical shape). Both instruments create the rhythm texture combining the three beats of the $\frac{3}{4}$ with the two beats of the $\frac{6}{8}$. The high pitches of the ring of the *bombo* and the high string of the guitar are in charge of the $\frac{6}{8}$, meanwhile the low pitches of the head of the *bombo* plus the thumb playing the low strings of guitar are in charge of the $\frac{3}{4}$.



Ag. = high pitches

Gr. = low pitches

Extracted from: Robinson Degregorio, "La Acentuación del Segundo y Tercer Tiempo en la Ejecución del Ritmo de la Chacarera," *Ritmos Tradicionales Argentinos*, entry posted November 18, 2011, <http://robinson-degregorio.blogspot.com> (accessed September 16, 2013).

What interests me most is the wealth of folklore rhythm, in particular, the concordance and discordance relations between melodic rhythm and the beat, something that is very present in *chacarera* and in folk music in general of moderato to fast tempo.

Chacarera rhythmic elements I use:

- Highlight the time 2 and 3 seen in 3/4
- Polymetrics common in 3/4, 6/8 and 3/2 (the latter known as hemiola)

As for now, I was interested in using the Dorian mode, for being one of the most characteristic scales of the Northwest music, present in other melodies (Example: *Chacarera "La Vieja"*)

Regarding the effects [of the saxophone], I do not use these resources much, only short appoggiaturas, also typical of the folk style.⁴³

In Budini's piece the mixing of classical elements with popular ones is given in the use of the rhythmic tension of folklore in combination with the classical technique of canon for four voices. These characteristics are easy to see from measure 1-18. The folkloric element is immediately evident in the first measures (see figure 2).

In the interview with Budini, he was asked about his perception regarding saxophonists perform his piece who have a formal music education. The question particularly was: In your experience, have you found any kind of conflict or difficulty in the saxophonists when they play these rhythms? Do you think they could be performing better if the saxophonist has a previous training in these rhythms? His answer was highly interesting and valuable from the compositional point of view:

In reality, the difficulty isn't related to their understanding or not of what is written from the cognitive point of view, but if the player hasn't has any external formation [out of the academy] or particular interest in popular music, what is written results totally mechanical and inexpressive. In spite of many indications in the score, if the player doesn't have that "praxis" that exceed what is written, the result is fairly poor and inconsequential.⁴⁴

⁴³ Rolando Budini, interview by author, Baton Rouge, LA, September 15, 2013. The original interview is in Spanish, the author has made the English translation.

⁴⁴ Rolando Budini, interview by author, Baton Rouge, LA, August 28, 2013. See Appendix I.

La Conspicua

14 - 02 - 06

Rolando Budini

The image shows a musical score for 'La Conspicua' by Rolando Budini. It is a four-staff score for Soprano Sax, Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, and Baritone Sax. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 180. The Alto Sax part is circled in red, showing a complex rhythmic pattern with accents and slurs. The Tenor Sax part has a circled section at the beginning. The Baritone Sax part has a circled section at the beginning. The Soprano Sax part is mostly rests with some notes at the end. The score includes measure numbers 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18.

Figure 2. Measures 1-18 of *La Conspicua*.

In Fernando Lerman's piece *Sonata para Saxofón Alto y Piano*, the folkloric and tango influence are present in each of the movements. The first movement, *Chacarero*, references the dance explained before. The second movement, *Reo y Misterioso* [*Indomitable and Mysterious*], shows the rhythmic syncopation characteristic of Piazzolla's music. The third movement, *Huaino*⁴⁵ *con Acelere* [*Huaino with*

⁴⁵ *Huaino*: is typically a Bolivian dance. It influences Argentine music, coming from the north of the country, basically the northwestern region. Different from the *chacarera*, the *huaino* presents its measure organized in 2/4 or 2/8. But, as it is a popular free genre, it can be also found with ternary division.

The main instruments used to perform the *huaino* are native wind instruments, as *sikus*, *queñas* or *zampoñas* and percussive ones as *bombo*, *tambor* and *caja*.

The scale used in this genre is a mixture between the typical pentatonic scale used in the Andean music – C, D, E, G, A – and the heptatonic occidental scale. The fusion originated a system that comprises two different modes. The mayor, based in the three notes of a major chord, and the minor based in four notes, the main minor triad plus the minor seventh. The resultant harmony is I – IV – V9.

Extracted from: Cecilia del Carmen Ramallo Díaz, *Análisis musical y especificidades del huayño de carnaval*, Borrás, 2000.

Acceleration], incorporates another folkloric dance. In this last case the influence comes from the far north, on the border with Bolivia, where the cultural influence of the Inca has been strong and is still present. In the excerpt shown below, the titles of the movements are accompanied by a few measures where the *Huaino* influences are immediately clear (see figure 3).

Música Argentina para Saxofón

SONATA

para Saxofón Alto y Piano

Fernando Lerman
(1995)

dedicada a María Noel Luzardo

I. Chacareroso
♩=130 *enérgico*

Piano

II. Reo y misterioso
♩=70

III. Huaino con accelere
libre - a piacere
♩=64

Figure 3. Title and first measures of the three movements of *Sonata para Saxofón Alto y Piano*.

With respect to his piece, the composer states:

My work as musician and composer is centered in the identity, I was always interested in a new development of Argentinian music . . . It would be interesting in this sense, to be able to develop an original repertoire that represents the country--that is a job that deserves to be planned and designed.⁴⁶

Lerman's words reflect what we see in his piece; the idea of having a music that represent the country is visible in the way he uses different regional styles, from different Argentine regions, rather than concentrating on only one.

In the interview with Lerman⁴⁷, the idea of popular music inserted in works for academic saxophone is constantly present, since he as composer and performer finds this is also an issue to resolve in Argentinian music. He asserts, "I think it should be invented a new way of performing to interpret the music I have written until now, something more related to the development of the saxophone in Argentina." In these words, the composer makes explicit reference to the need of a new way to play music for saxophone composed in Argentina. With respect to the different genres performed with the saxophone, and how it adapts to them, the composer states:

Here [Argentina] we had many jazz saxophonists and also a school of 'classical' saxophone brought in some way by [Hugo] Pierre, who introduced the French school . . . And there is also the treatment given to the saxophone in Tango and folklore, I think the ideal is to find a sound that comprise the classical and the popular music.

At the end, he also explains his expectation as a composer with regard to the attitude of the performer who plays his pieces:

I expect as composer that the performer has a special interest in the genre I propose, if I write something in *chacarera* rhythm I expect his reaction is to listen to some *chacarera*, to inform himself about what the *bombo* does or the violin for instance, and try to imitate the sonorities if it is possible.

⁴⁶ Fernando Lerman, interview by author, Buenos Aires, Argentina, April 10, 2005. The original interview is in Spanish, the author has made the English translation. See Appendix II.

⁴⁷ Fernando Lerman, interview.

And finally, with respect to tango he says, “. . . This also happens in tango, where the interpretation shouldn't be jazzy because there are effects in jazz that don't show up in tango.”

In Lerman's words, the need for a new approach in the teaching of the saxophone is recognizable. He, as a composer, finds a different commitment from the saxophonist is necessary to perform his music. When he says “. . . I expect his reaction is . . .,” he talks about the need of a different attitude from the performer, a more active approach to his work, with the player acting as a researcher who inquires about the music he is performing. This attitudinal change could be incorporated as a normal behavior in the performer, something he could learn from his early years in the academy.⁴⁸

In Mario Herrerías's piece *Niebla y Cemento*, the influence of tango is immediately evident, especially from Piazzola's music. Tango style is one of the most important styles from Argentina, and tango is intimately linked with Argentina's identity. Around the world, as jazz is for the United States, tango is considered the original contribution of Argentina to musical art in the twentieth century. As mentioned earlier, tango has its roots in the music of immigrants who came from Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. They settled principally in Buenos Aires, where the style arose and developed. By the 1960s, tango had been recognized around the world and was definitely more for listening than for dancing. Astor Piazzolla is the main figure of this period.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Possible solutions to this kind of approach could be found in Lucy Green thoughts covered in the last chapter of this work.

⁴⁹ For more information see the first edition of *La Historia del Tango*, by Astor Piazzolla, (Paris: Editions Henry Lemoine, 1986).

In Herrerías's piece, the influence of Piazzolla is clear in the rhythm; the regular 4/4 measure becomes a 3+3+2 in eight notes (see figure 4), incorporating the syncopated tension which is very common in music with popular roots.

Niebla y Cemento

Mario Herrerias

Alto Sax.

Piano

Energico $\text{♩} = 120$

p

Figure 4. Beginning of *Niebla y Cemento*.

Herrerías takes this element and later develops it into new and more original rhythmic structures, as when he turns the 4/4 to 11/8 in measures 95 and 96 (see figure 5). About Piazzolla's influences the composer states,

Astor [Piazzolla] for me is very important . . . the guy achieved what the great composer achieves, transcends with a very intimate music, very personal, and makes of that something universal, that is great . . . he left to me a lot, and I work over the rhythmic issues he imposed; there are very interesting elements. I try not to go to the same place in terms of harmony and melody, which would be a sheer copy. But it is true, I depart from his rhythm and develop it, as when it shows up in the 11/8 in *Niebla y Cemento*. I try to investigate to which extent it can go without losing that local color.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Mario Herrerías, interview by Fernando Lerman, Buenos Aires, Argentina, July 24, 2004. This interview is part of Fernando Lerman's thesis "Borrando Fronteras," http://www.fernandolerman.com/index.php/trabajos-academicos/doc_details/18-tesis-de-maestria.html (accessed November 1, 2013). The original interview is in Spanish, the author has made the English translation.

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.) and Piano (Pno.). The score covers measures 95 and 96. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. In measure 95, the saxophone part features a melodic line with eighth notes and slurs, while the piano accompaniment consists of chords and eighth-note patterns. In measure 96, the saxophone part continues with a similar melodic line, and the piano accompaniment includes a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo) and features a more complex rhythmic pattern with slurs and accents. The saxophone part in measure 95 is highlighted with a red rectangular box.

Figure 5. Measures 95 and 96 of *Niebla y Cemento*.

Herrerías finds in tango the local element that makes his composition recognizable as an authentic Argentinian music. With his composition, Herrerías gives to the performer the possibility of exploring tango style; his clear influence from Piazzolla could serve as a bridge for the saxophonist to explore more about this famous tango composer and about this authentic Argentine music. The teaching of tango in academies is still an issue to resolve. Imagine an Argentine professional saxophonist going to a World Saxophone Congress and someone asking him about how to play tango. His very possible answer will be “I have no idea, I passed all my years in school playing European music.” Isn’t tango the style people around the world recognize as the most characteristic Argentine music? Wouldn’t it be important for the rest of the musicians around the world if Argentine performers, professionals or not, know the basics of how to play tango?⁵¹

⁵¹ Possible solutions to these questions could be found in the last chapter of this work.

Possible Solutions

The premise of this work is, in a broad sense, concerns the need for changing specific things in a particular reality. At first glance, these words may sound like a radical idea in which the previous order of things must be broken or changed abruptly. On the contrary, the idea is to bring into the academy what is happening in real life, bringing musical concepts together rather than avoid or deny any of them. My personal experience as an academic student, plus the reading of authors that approach the theme from different angles, gave me the frame to treat the subject and to find the possible solutions I explore here.

Some authors I have presented, such as Canclini and Foster, write from a sociological point of view. Specifically, they write about particularities in Latin America societies, about the cultural elements that differentiate them from Western European civilization. Others, like Frega, have presented the musical reality of what has happened in Argentina since its formation as an independent nation, mentioning also the need for an update and change in the program of music study all along the country. And finally, some other authors I will present, discuss the division of the actual state of music learning and teaching in the academy, referring to the lack of sensitivity those institutions possess regarding the realities outside of academies in modern societies.

Two scholars will be covered in this last chapter: Lucy Green with her thoughts presented in her book *How Popular Musicians Learn*, in which she explores how to bring high-school students closer to music making; and Roger Johnson with his concepts in his splendid article “Critically Reflective Musicianship,” in which he constructively criticizes the current state of classical music. The former investigates the way popular music is

transmitted and its differences with classical music. In the latter, Johnson discusses the actual state of music making in society and how the learning, teaching and production of classical music in the academy is anachronistic with respect to music making. Both of them present solutions that are related to the main thrust of my work.

Green explores the modern behavior of people with respect to music making and listening. She also discusses the difference between this behavior now and in the past, which opens the possibility to understand how actual societies live and interact with music in general. New technologies help with the accessibility of music consumption, and markets and musical productions of all kinds also make music an available item to be “consumed.” With respect to this she asserts, “As distinct from making music, a huge proportion of today’s global population *listens* to music . . .”⁵²

Assuming the fact that people now experience music more through listening than through making, the next step is to observe what kind of music people are listening to. This is essential information that could serve as a base and foundation to compare how teaching and learning in the specialized centers of formal music education is occurring, and how this contrasts with respect to what is happening in real life. In this respect, Lucy Green asserts that music education doesn’t cover the musical needs of the large extent of the population in the world:

What music do most people listen to? . . . Over 90 per cent of global sales of music recordings consist of popular music, including traditional forms such as folk and blues, with classical music making up only 3 or 4 per cent, and jazz even less; whilst figures for radio listening and concert attendance paint a very similar picture.⁵³

⁵² Lucy Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead for Music Education* (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2002), 2.

⁵³ Lucy Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn*, 3.

These very simple but real assertions are covered throughout her book, the research she made serves to open the eyes of the people who are in charge of the curricula in music academies and the answers she found are related to the thoughts I present in this work. Societies are different all around the world, but the premises are surprisingly similar, expanding the problem to the whole of music education and not only focused in the teaching of the saxophone in Argentina.

Lucy Green's solutions outline her understanding of the way in which popular musicians develop musical skills and notes that teachers have not yet integrated them into the formal classroom. Because these solutions are distinctive of popular musicians, the possible use of these processes in academies and conservatories could work as a bridge from what musicians learn and produce and what the society demands. These five points are as follows:

- Popular musician choose their own music, therefore they are using music that they know and love and identify with.
- They learn to play by ear, which gives them a better development of aural skills.
- They work both by themselves and with friends, sharing with them similar musical tastes.
- Learning tends to be idiosyncratic, personal, haphazard and it also takes place without any teacher or adult.
- They tend to integrate all the skills of listening, composing, performing and improvising all the way through the learning process.⁵⁴

The idea of adapting formal musical learning to the new parameters that society is dictating is not only a preoccupation in Britain, Lucy Green's home, but also in the

⁵⁴ Lucy Green, "What can Teachers Learn from Popular Musicians?", Interview by Flávia Narita, London, November 21, 2011, (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r8zoHT4ExY>, accessed September 17, 2013).

United States, where thinkers such as Roger Johnson have also discussed it. In his article “Critically Reflective Musicianship,” Johnson addresses the problem of current formal music education (or “historic classic music practices” as he calls it), and its disconnection with current musical practices in the society. He states, “Despite some progressive pockets, most educational institutions in the developed world still teach the older classical skills and conventions *exclusively* and in isolation from almost anything else.”⁵⁵ His outlook highlights the fact that this problem in music academies has spread in other places, and that the need for change is evident and urgent. I mostly present the issue from a sociological point of view, stressing the point that Argentina is a country with cultural particularities that deserve attention. Meanwhile, Johnson focuses on the universe of the academies and conservatories itself. As he says, “At this point, our educational models and practices represent a bizarre misfit with the contemporary world that would be impossible to imagine in virtually any other field.”⁵⁶

The dysfunctional separation between what is taught in the specialized centers for music education and the “real worlds of music” is an issue deserving attention. Again, the gap between what academies are producing and what people in the society are consuming as music listeners brings immediately to the surface the need for a change. The following statement by Johnson clarifies the actual state of things:

Whatever place classical music finds for itself in the twenty-first century, one thing is certain: It will continue to represent only a very small part of the totality of music and music making on the planet. Through much of the twentieth century, many new musical forms, media, and social practices have emerged to become now the dominant and increasingly global standard for what contemporary, post-

⁵⁵ Roger Johnson, “Critically Reflective Musicianship,” in *Music Education for Changing Times: Guiding Visions for Practice*, ed. by Thomas A. Regelski and J. Terry Gates, 17-26 (New York: Springer, 2009), 17.

⁵⁶ Roger Johnson, “Critically Reflective Musicianship,” 18.

modern music is all about. The term “popular” is generally used to refer to this music, though it may not be the most descriptive or inclusive term to use.⁵⁷

Johnson’s words are related to Green’s, referring to what proportion of people listen to specific kinds of music. The aim of my work is not to put classical music in an isolated place, or to try to present it as the mother of the problem, but to discuss the need of the incorporation into the academy of what is happening in musical terms in the real world.

As a musician trained in classical music in the academy, reading Johnson’s article made me feel uncomfortable. But considering the parallels I found with my personal experiences and with what I discovered from other authors, I can say that the severity of his outlook could help to modify the state of formal musical education. At the end of his work he presents, as Lucy Green did, possible solutions to bring music education closer to the “real worlds of musical practices.”⁵⁸

The possible solutions Johnson found and that can be applied to any musical institution in any country are:

- Students bringing in examples of the music they are listening to, sharing and discussing them with their peers.
- Musicianship labs with plenty of instruments and interactive technologies.
- Students working on tracks for their own music in the computer lab.
- Ensembles rehearsing original songs or “covers” to play for the school [or class].
- Students working on soundtracks for videos.
- Professional musicians visiting classes, labs, or rehearsals—as models and to offer their support. Of course, these are creative, lab/studio models:

⁵⁷ Roger Johnson, “Critically Reflective Musicianship,” 22.

⁵⁸ Roger Johnson, “Critically Reflective Musicianship,” 25.

decentralized, interactive, collaborative, fostering independent musicianship, and encouraging diversity.⁵⁹

The possible solutions these two authors found are linked with the solutions I will present next. As they have shown, music education in other countries is being revised in concordance with what society produces and demands. In Argentina, particular idiosyncratic elements are added to the need for music education revision. More specifically, in the realm of classical saxophone, composers have been creating a repertoire that shows elements linked directly with what society produces. Nevertheless, the teaching of saxophone sets aside the Argentine elements that composers have incorporated and, on the contrary, focuses its content on what European societies have produced.

Both academies as well as conservatories should be places where musicians acquire the necessary musical elements, which allow them to interact accurately with their own cultures. Since these academies are part of their indigenous cultural environments, they should reflect the musical expression of that particular society. Academies should not consider themselves as a disconnected entity from their communities. They should demonstrate sensitivity to what their contemporary society expresses and needs, be capable of change, and rethink their programs according to the cultural/artistic/musical expressions of their own milieu.

It is not enough to create new careers in popular music within the conservatories; musicians trained in the European-Classical tradition should be able to incorporate popular elements into their performances, inasmuch as the pieces in the classical repertoire require this ability from them.

⁵⁹ Roger Johnson, "Critically Reflective Musicianship," 25.

My suggested possible solutions include:

1. Conservatory students should listen to popular music, primarily those popular genres incorporated in classical pieces. For example, if a piece has *chacarera* rhythms, let the students should listen and analyze by ear the characteristics of the genre. Furthermore, teachers should help students explore music of the popular culture and allow students to bring that music into the studio. Popular musicians typically learn through a process of copying, assimilating, and re-creating; for example, copying from a recording, assimilating the musical material into their own vocabulary, and later re-creating their own music. I would advise students to copy from the recordings of the masters of classical saxophone (Mule, Rascher, Teal, Leeson, Rousseau, Hemke, Sinta, Londeix, Deffayet, Delangle, etc.): explore the sound, articulation, vibrato, and phrasing by ear, trying to play as they do.
2. Superb aural skills are essential in making any kind of music. Usually, aural skills are developed by the use of the voice, but we should also incorporate instruments in the same exercises. Moreover, the student should be able to identify harmonies as well as melodies; for example, a student who is playing the melody of a concerto may also recognize the harmonic function of each note. Also, tuning exercises should be incorporated in relation to the harmonic context – which is to say, a conscious use of just intonation.
3. Improvisation is a useful tool not only for jazz, but also to develop creativity and harmonic notions. Usually, pieces of the classical repertoire do not include improvisatory sections; nevertheless the learning of this resource may expand students' creativity and possibilities. In the past, western European musicians were more capable of improvising

than modern classical musicians. The possibility of restoring this tool into the classical realm could help to expand the boundaries of academic musicians into the popular scene.

4. Popular musicians should be invited to talk about their experiences and share the way they learn and understand music. Students trained with formal music education would have the possibility of questioning and interacting with musicians with informal musical training.

These small changes could make a big difference in the education of Argentine musicians. With these differences, perhaps more students would be more employable and generally have better careers throughout the country. It is possible that applied in other countries with sensitivity to local cultures, these changes could cause a better understanding of popular culture among classically trained musicians.

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Appendix I

Interview with Rolando Budini

- What elements of popular music of Argentina are particularly attractive for you to use in your compositions? Which of them have you used in *La Conspicua* and how?

"What interests me most is the wealth of folklore rhythm, in particular, the concordance and discordance relations between melodic rhythm and the beat, something that is very present in *chacarera* and in folk music in general of moderato to fast tempo.

Chacarera rhythmic elements I use:

- Highlight the beat 2 and 3 seen in 3/4
- Polymetrics common in 3/4, 6/8 and 3/2 (the latter known as hemiola)

As for now, I was interested in using the Dorian mode, for being one of the most characteristic scales of the Northwest music, present in other melodies (Example: *Chacarera "La Vieja"*)

Regarding the effects [of the saxophone], I do not use these resources much, only short appoggiaturas, also typical of the folkloric style"

- How do you adapt these elements in the writing for saxophone?

"Actually, I had no major problems or difficulties, because I ask fairly conventional use of the instrument. The few effects, such as appoggiaturas, are simple to solve. "

- In your experience, have you found any kind of conflict or difficulty in the saxophonists when they play these rhythms? Do you think they could be performing better if the saxophonist has a previous training in these rhythms?

"In reality, the difficulty isn't related to their understanding or not of what is written from the cognitive point of view, but if the player hasn't had any external formation [out of the academy] or particular interest in popular music, what is written results totally mechanical and inexpressive. In spite of many indications in the score, if the player doesn't have that "praxis" that exceed what is written, the result is fairly poor and inconsequential"

Appendix II

Conclusions of Fernando Lerman Interview

“The saxophone is not instrument of the orchestra, in this sense we can say that is a relative of the guitar and the piano. They are instruments that develop as soloists. For example, when composing for guitar in academic music, as this is an instrument mainly popular, inevitably will reflect this. With the sax is happening something similar.

It would be interesting, in this regard, to develop a new original repertoire that represent the country, and that's a work must be build, something that must be thought out and planned.

Somehow there are people who are unwittingly contributing to this concept, for example the recording of María Noel Luzardo "Chamber Music for Saxophone, " which includes two works by Argentine composers. Also the work of cataloging Argentine works for saxophone by Luzardo and Gabriela Mauriño, also the work of Villafruela where it appears in a web page all cataloged works in Latin America (www.Saxofonlatino.com), is very interesting, everyone can access and we should continue contributing from every area since the initial work is done and open to the collective.

Fernando Lerman will present their final work of the Master of Music Performance of Latin American Music of the Twentieth Century, where he will analyze compositions of the last decade that according to him have many things in common: the first is that they include folk music material and most have an emotional connection with Piazzolla, more or less conscious, I will also include works that have these characteristics but which are not specific for saxophone, which I will adapt to the instrument. At first, the works will be for saxophone and piano, for any student of any conservatory could play this repertoire.

In this collection are all these common characteristics, post-Piazzolla projection and a close relationship with popular music.”

Academic Music with Swing?

One of the most interesting concepts that come into contact with Lerman is the vision of a new way of addressing the academic composers that include some element of popular genre.

“The Master [mentioned before] opens a new perspective is this tendency to play works by Latin American composers, which mostly they naturally take elements of folklore and the typical music of each region, which requires a new way of performing.

This feature is what may be termed as Swing, this means it will be necessary a study by the performers of the music of each region, in order to incorporate into academic works that thing is just characteristic of popular music. This is a new posture, it means that there

are scholarly works that introduce elements of tango, and so the interpreter will have to listen to tangos, understand its essence and try to imitate the style.

My work as a musician and composer is centered on identity; I was always interested to make a new development of Argentine music. Even before studying composition and instrument, I had a group with Alejandro Manzon with which we played folklore, for me it was always a necessity. "

Saxophone and Tango

“With the sax and tango happens something special. The saxophone is still waiting to get into the tango, many people resist and with some reason, it is true that many instruments are akin to a musical genre, the bandoneon with tango, certain traditional wind instruments with music of northwest and the Andes, the sax with the jazz.

Many choose to play soprano sax for tango, that is no coincidence as it has a sound that is between the oboe and clarinet, a sound closer to tango and not so much that sound like they have the alto and tenor, fully associate with jazz, with effects that are characteristic of the style.

The saxophonist also have to take the work to look good which mouthpiece to use, think possibly more in the sound of a clarinet, a cello, a viola vibrato if plays alto sax.”

Speaking of his works as composer Lerman let us know:

" As a composer I have a some works but I would like to have more, the two most important works for saxophone are the Sonata for saxophone alto and piano and the saxophone quartet, both have 3 movements. The Sonata is a bit more academic, is dedicated to Mary Noel Luzardo, written 12 or 13 years ago and designed for a classical saxophonist, because of the technique, etc. It was shown in a United States Luzardo's tour and then called from those places because the elements of folk music and the tango. I found that in the saxophone there is a space that was important to occupy, hence, these two works arose and a work for solo saxophone that is nearing completion that has 5 numbers, one dedicated to each saxophonist of Buenos Aires, Hugo Pierre, Maria Noel Luzardo, Skorupsky, Jorge Retamoza and a special self-portrait. There are also duets that were premiered in the Colon theatre in 2004, they were performed with saxophone alto and baritone, but also can be played with 2 altos as well. "

Always with the language related to popular music, which comes from the first notes. No periods but a constant compositional style, this feature is very common in Latin America , where there is too much time and then you have to write works that are meaningful and that you feel identified , eventually people are to decide whether the work continues or not , and at first is the interpreter which has to be attracted to the work.

" It is true that in Argentina the composition is not supported at all, that's true and is ok to complain, but it is also true that composition is a necessity, I feel the need to compose

and as I feel the need for eating. What you write someone has to be interested to perform and a public must be interested to hear it, and even if it passes 10 or 20 years does not matter, but these reactions must occur. Maybe in academic music are different times than in the popular where there is always a matter of immediacy. While in other countries like the Netherlands, there is much more spread of saxophone, where there are also many quartets, have also been closed many cycles of contemporary music because people would not attend them. "

Final Idea

“I think it should be invented a new way of performing to interpret the music I have written until now, something more related to the development of the saxophone in Argentina. Here [Argentina] we had many jazz saxophonists and also a school of ‘classical’ saxophone brought in some way by [Hugo] Pierre, who introduced the French school . . . And there is also the treatment given to the saxophone in Tango and folklore, I think the ideal is to find a sound that comprise the classical and the popular music.

I expect as composer that the performer has a special interest in the genre I propose, if I write something in *chacarera* rhythm I expect his reaction is to listen to some *chacarera*, to inform himself about what the *bombo* does or the violin for instance, and try to imitate the sonorities if it is possible.

This also happens in tango, where the interpretation shouldn’t be jazzy because there are effects in jazz that don’t show up in tango.

This is a new way that I think is good to explore.”

The Vita

Mauricio Gabriel Agüero, Argentinian saxophonist, was the co-creator and author of the project “Saxophone Studio at National University of Cuyo,” which permitted the establishment of the first Saxophone Studio at the National University of Cuyo in Mendoza, Argentina.

He was Professor of Saxophone at IUPA (Patagonian Institute of Art) from 2003 until 2008. He earned the position of Solo Saxophonist of the Chamber Orchestra of Río Negro, Argentina. His ensemble experience in Argentina includes performances with the Youth Orchestra of the School of Music and the Professional Orchestra of the National University of Cuyo, and the Chamber Orchestra of Río Negro; in the United States, he appeared with the Gainesville Chamber Orchestra, the University of Florida Wind Symphony, and the Wind Symphony and Jazz Band at Louisiana State University.

Agüero received his Bachelor of Music degree in saxophone performance at the National University of Cuyo, where he was distinguished with a “Special Mention.” In 2010, he received his Master of Music in saxophone performance from the University of Florida, where he studied with Dr. Jonathan Helton. Currently, he is pursuing the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts with a major in saxophone performance and a minor in Jazz Studies at Louisiana State University, where he is studying with Dr. Griffin Campbell as major professor and Dr. William Grimes as minor professor. Once he obtains this degree, he will become the first Doctor of Music with saxophone emphasis in his country.