

CONTEMPORARY MEXICAN CLASSICAL GUITAR MUSIC AT THE TURN OF THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: SELECTED COMPOSITIONS 1988-2003

by

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SIGNED: Alejandro Lazo

To my mother Maria Isabel and my father Alberto†, for their unbending love, support and
inspiration

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES.....	6
ABSTRACT.....	8
INTRODUCTION.....	10
1. THE USE OF COMPLEX MUSICAL NOTATION.....	14
2. HIGHLY DISJUNCT MELODIC CONTOUR.....	18
3. EXTENDED TECHNIQUES.....	21
4. INNOVATIVE TIMBRES.....	32
5. RHYTHMIC COMPLEXITY.....	37
6. RAPIDLY CHANGING DYNAMICS.....	40
7. PERCUSSIVE EFFECTS.....	42
8. REPETITIVE RHYTHMIC AND/OR MELODIC CELLS.....	45
9. ATONALITY.....	47
10. CONCLUSION.....	49
REFERENCES.....	52

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Illustration 1.1: Example from <i>Primer Interludio</i>	14
Illustration 1.2: Example from <i>Elegía</i>	14
Illustration 1.3: Example from <i>Tres Instantáneas</i>	15
Illustration 1.4: Example from <i>Haikus</i>	15
Illustration 2.1: Example from <i>Primer Interludio</i>	18
Illustration 2.2: Example from <i>Sydolira</i>	19
Illustration 2.3: Example from <i>Impello</i>	19
Illustration 3.1: Example from <i>Primer Interludio</i>	21
Illustration 3.2: Example from <i>Elegía 2</i>	22
Illustration 3.3: Example from <i>Haikus</i>	23
Illustration 3.4: Example from <i>Primer Interludio</i>	24
Illustration 3.5: Example from <i>Tres Instantáneas</i>	25
Illustration 3.6: Example from <i>Sydolira</i>	25
Illustration 3.7: Example from <i>Sonata</i>	26
Illustration 3.8: Example from <i>Impello</i>	26
Illustration 3.9: Example from <i>Primer Interludio</i>	27
Illustration 3.10: Example from <i>Sydolira</i>	28
Illustration 3.11: Example from <i>Primer Interludio</i>	29
Illustration 3.12: Example from <i>Primer Interludio</i>	30
Illustration 3.13: Example from <i>Sonata</i>	30

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES - *Continued*

Illustration 3.14: Example from <i>Sonata</i>	31
Illustration 4.1: Example from <i>Primer Interludio</i>	33
Illustration 4.2: Example from <i>Primer Interludio</i>	35
Illustration 4.3: Example from <i>Haiku</i>	35
Illustration 4.4: Example from <i>Tres Instantáneas</i>	36
Illustration 5.1: Example from <i>Elegía 2</i>	37
Illustration 5.2: Example from <i>Sonata</i>	38
Illustration 5.3: Example from <i>Sydolira</i>	38
Illustration 5.4: Example from <i>Impello</i>	39
Illustration 5.5: Example from <i>Primer Interludio</i>	39
Illustration 6.1: Example from <i>Primer Interludio</i>	40
Illustration 6.2: Example from <i>Tres Instantáneas</i>	41
Illustration 7.1: Example from <i>Primer Interludio</i>	42
Illustration 7.2: Example from <i>Elegía 2</i>	43
Illustration 8.1: Example from <i>Primer Interludio</i>	45
Illustration 8.2: Example from <i>Tres Instantáneas</i>	45
Illustration 8.3: Example from <i>Sonata</i>	46

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to discover if Arturo Fuentes' *Primer Interludio* incorporates a number of stylistic features typical of guitar music written by Mexican contemporaries from 1988 to 2003. These features include the use of complex musical notation, highly disjunct melodic contour, extended techniques, innovative timbres, rhythmic complexity, rapidly changing dynamics, atonality, percussive effects and repetitive rhythmic and/or melodic cells.

As a point of departure a list of guitar works by representative Mexican composers was compiled. From this list the following works were chosen since they exemplify the stylistic trends I wish to highlight: *Tres Instantáneas* (1988) by Manuel Enríquez, *Sonata* (1992) and *Elegía 2* (2000) by Hebert Vázquez, *Haikus* (2000) by Ana Lara, *Sydolira* (2000) by Gabriela Ortíz, and *Impello* (2003) by Francisco Javier González Compeán.

By comparative analysis, I have associated certain stylistic features between these contemporary Mexican composers. I have been able to get a glimpse of some of the underlying stylistic unities found in these guitar compositions that seem rather separate.

There are a number of stylistic features common to all of the composers discussed herein as well as few characteristics where only some of them converge. However, this

research shows that Arturo Fuentes' *Primer Interludio* is representative of several stylistic features commonly found in guitar music written by contemporary Mexican composers.

There is a vast variety of Mexican guitar works created in recent years that remain unknown to today's classical music world, academic community and general public. Mexico possesses a large repertoire of guitar works, music for solo guitar and guitar with a wide array of ensemble combinations from duets to large ensembles and guitar concertos. Many of these works would undoubtedly challenge a performer of the highest caliber.

One of the purposes of this project is to promote contemporary Mexican classical guitar music. I hope to awake interest in this contemporary music style and encourage other musicians to include Mexican works in their concert repertoire.

INTRODUCTION

Guitar technique throughout the world has experienced many changes over the last three decades and has increasingly transformed the guitar into a rich sound source of infinite expressive capabilities. The spectrum of sounds and expressive possibilities of the instrument today are enormous, and there is a vast repertoire of new music that requires a meticulous approach from the performer. Today's performers should possess skills beyond the traditional technique of the classical guitar and be open to constantly incorporating new techniques. In some cases, these skills may only be applied in one or a handful of pieces, which is why many guitarists refuse to spend so much time learning new techniques they rarely use. These technical novelties are slowly growing to be standardized as more composers and performers become familiar with them.

In Mexico the guitar has been a traditional instrument for centuries, primarily in popular music. In the twentieth century, it has earned a place in classical music and has played an important part in Mexico's music life. The music by composers such as Manuel M. Ponce (1882-1948), Julian Carrillo (1875-1965), Carlos Chávez (1899-1978), Blas Galindo (1910- 1993) and Rodolfo Halffter (1900-1987) constitute the beginning of a new and extensive exploration of the guitar as a musical medium in Mexico. In recent decades, composers that have contributed to the repertoire of Mexican guitar music include, among others, Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras (b. 1927), Manuel Enríquez (1926-1994), Mario Lavista (b. 1943), Arturo Márquez (b. 1950), Ana Lara (b. 1959), Gabriela Ortíz (b. 1964), Juan Trigos (b. 1965), Carlos Sánchez Gutiérrez (b. 1964), Hilda Paredes (b.

1957) and Ernesto García de León (b. 1952). More recently an expanding number of performers have been working closely with Mexican composers in order to expand the available repertoire for classical guitar; with a clear desire to explore new technical possibilities on the instrument and make contemporary music accessible to wider audiences.

The purpose of this research is to discover if Arturo Fuentes' *Primer Interludio* incorporates a number of stylistic features typical of guitar music written by Mexican contemporaries from 1988 to 2003. These features include the use of complex musical notation, highly disjunct melodic contour, extended techniques, innovative timbres, rhythmic complexity, rapidly changing dynamics, atonality, percussive effects and repetitive rhythmic and/or melodic cells.

For practical reasons I have decided to limit my research to this period (1988-2003), considering that fifteen years is a substantial period of time to represent a wide range of generations of composers. 1988 was the year when Manuel Enriquez, widely considered as one of the most significant Mexican composers of the second half of the twentieth century, composed his first and only solo guitar work. It is my perception that in the fifteen years that followed, and still to the present year, there has been an increasing interest in the guitar as a serious concert instrument. The attention drawn to the guitar is evident in the increased number of new guitar compositions, new guitarists and new guitar festivals.

As a point of departure a list of guitar works by representative Mexican composers was compiled. From this list, selected works were gathered using the following criteria: 1- The composers of the selected works have to be, to some degree, renowned composers; that is, their biographies have to reflect a continuous and serious participation in Mexico's classical music concerts. 2- The guitar works have to already been premiered publicly in a major music festival or venue; and 3- The composers have to be at least thirty years of age to reflect a degree of experience and a substantial number of years participating in Mexico's music life. Then the following works were chosen since they exemplify the stylistic trends I wish to highlight: *Tres Instantáneas* (1988) by Manuel Enríquez, *Sonata* (1992) and *Elegía 2* (2000) by Hebert Vázquez, *Haikus* (2000) by Ana Lara, *Sydolira* (2000) by Gabriela Ortíz, and *Impello* (2003) by Francisco Javier González Compeán.

Primer Interludio was composed by Arturo Fuentes in March of 2001. In 2002 it was published by Ediciones Mexicanas de Música. The Spanish title of the piece in this publication is *Primer Interludio en Siete Partes, para Guitarra*; that is, "First Interlude in Seven Parts, for Guitar." As the title indicates, the piece is divided into seven short parts or movements. *Primer Interludio* was created as a deeper exploration of his earlier work for solo guitar *Interludi Continui*; Fuentes focuses primarily on the elaboration of the musical ideas and concepts presented in the first of these *Interludi Continui*. This work won second prize at the 1997 Suvini Zerboni Editions Guitar Composition Competition in Milan, Italy, and was later published by this publishing house.

Fuentes possesses a broad knowledge of the guitar and as a consequence his music is clearly idiomatic for the instrument. Fuentes is a composer that has followed a common practice of countless Mexican composers; namely, to first study music in Mexico and later travel abroad to continue their music education.

Some of the features presented in this document are discussed in more than one section, since they are being observed from different perspectives. For example, a technical aspect might be discussed from the standpoint of extended techniques as well as from the point of view of how this technique, when performed on the guitar, produces an innovative timbre.

1. THE USE OF COMPLEX MUSICAL NOTATION

The degree of complexity that this music possesses is inherently accompanied by complex notation. Therefore, all of these Mexican contemporary guitar works are composed using complex musical notation to some degree. A number of these works are written using a more complex notation system, for instance, *Primer Interludio*, *Elegía 2*, *Sonata and Tres Instantáneas*. Consequently, it is common in most of these pieces to find an introductory table with a detailed description of the notation symbols used throughout the music. Here are some examples of complex musical notation found in these compositions:

Example 1.1 from the first movement of *Primer Interludio* (rehearsal N13):

Example 1.2 from *Elegía 2* (Page 9):

placed on top of clusters or “chords” which makes the reading of these sound clusters less intimidating. Not until recent years has this system of writing chords been used in contemporary classical guitar music. To the best of my knowledge Arturo Fuentes is one of the first composers to take this popular device and incorporate it in a “serious” contemporary concert work. It is undoubtedly a tool that helps make reading and learning complex contemporary guitar music faster. Example 1.1 illustrates the use of this system.

Scordatura to Eb is used in *Primer Interludio* and in *Haikus*. Fuentes drops the first string of the guitar from E to Eb for the entire piece and Ana Lara detunes the low E, sixth string, to Eb in her sixth *Haiku*. *Scordatura* is a musical term that refers to the act of changing the standard pitch of an open string. It was a frequently used technique in the baroque era “The lute, having the largest surviving solo repertory of any instrument before the 19th century, has the greatest number of pieces in scordatura tunings (approximately 1600).”¹ In modern times, it is common to drop the tuning of the sixth string of the guitar from E to D. It is also somewhat common to move the fifth string from A to G when transcribing piano works for the guitar, and occasionally the third string is lowered from G to F# to play renaissance music. Changing the standard tuning of the guitar provides the opportunity to extend the range of the instrument. Additionally, it offers various performance and compositional possibilities and consequently is

¹ Tyler, Richard. “Scordatura: Lute and Guitar.” *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy. <http://www.grovemusic.com> (Accessed 15 February 2007).

frequently used in a number of music styles, including classical, blues, rock and Hawaiian music.

The *scordatura* in Fuentes' and Lara's works is written at actual pitch. It is important to mention that there are two approaches when writing music considering the use of *scordatura*. One system is to write the actual pitch to be played and the second mode is to write the transposed note of the standard tuning, as it would normally be played. The latter form considers writing the finger position on the guitar with the idea that guitarists are used to reading positions rather than actual sounds. However, the most common approach is to write the actual pitch to be played.

Although *scordatura* is a somewhat common practice in classical guitar playing the manner in which is used by these two composers creates unique sounds and adds a slight element of complexity to the notation and performance of their music. Through most of the examples presented later in this research project we will continue to observe that complex musical notation is a stylistic feature typical of guitar music written by Mexican composers from 1988 to 2003.

2. HIGHLY DISJUNCT MELODIC CONTOUR

The melodic contours in the Mexican guitar works discussed herein are generally disjunct. Namely, it is common to find disconnected melodies where the notes move in large leaps. *Primer Interludio* does not incorporate straightforward melodic lines. The melodic shapes in this music, if any, are interweaved in a continuum of sound events. This fabric of sound tends to weaken the sense of melody. Nevertheless, the constant use of accented notes gives emphasis to certain pitches that within each phrase render horizontal coherence. The linear interrelationships produced over a period of time create unique and disjunct melodic gestures.

Example 2.1 from the fourth movement of *Primer Interludio* (rehearsal N. 57):

Additionally, Enriquez provides disconnected melodic progressions in the second movement of his *Tres Instantáneas*. In the fifth system of this movement a series of four notes is composed by a sequence of large intervals, such as two consecutive descending fourths followed by an ascending leap of a tenth: F sharp, C sharp, G sharp and B (Example 8.2 on page 44). In the opening bars of *Sydolira* the melodic contour has a strong rhythmic flow but is also perceived rather disjunct (Opening 13 bars). Furthermore, presented in slower tempo later in this work, the melodies in bars 159, 163, 165 and 168 are marked by an apparent lack of continuity.

Example 2.2 from *Sydolira* (bars 165 & 163):

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is labeled '165' and contains a melodic line in treble clef with a 3/8 time signature. It features a series of eighth notes followed by a triplet of eighth notes. Below the staff, there is a dynamic marking 'pp' with a hairpin crescendo leading to 'p dolce'. The bottom staff is labeled '163' and shows a melodic line in treble clef with a 3/8 time signature, consisting of six notes with various accidentals. Below this staff, there is a dynamic marking 'p dolce'.

Melodic shapes of a similar nature are also observed in González Compeán's *Impello*. In his second movement, in slow tempo, he provides melodic lines that extend two octaves within six notes (Example 2.3). Ana Lara presents several large and continuous melodic leaps in bars 22-27 of the third movement and bars 30-33 of the sixth movement of *Haikus*. Vázquez touches this trait of highly disjunct melodic contour in his *Sonata*, as seen in the opening movement.

Example 2.3 from *Impello* (Second movement):

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. It features two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with a large slur over it. Above the staff, there are tempo markings: 'Lento' at the beginning and 'Presto' at the end. Below the staff, there are dynamic markings: 'mf', 'f', and 'ff'. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line. Above the bass line, there are markings: 'Lento' and 'Presto'. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a fermata.

In works like *Sydolira*, *Haikus*, *Impello* and *Tres Instantáneas* a clearer sense of melodic contour is sometimes found, but these melodic events have a tendency to be short. In Lara's, Vázquez' and Ortiz' music there are musical gestures permeated with a profound lyrical expression. Nevertheless, most of this guitar music lacks lyrical melodic lines. The melodic contours tend to possess large leaps and there is a clear avoidance of traditional harmonic implications.

3. EXTENDED TECHNIQUES

Extended techniques found include the gradual change of sound from “normal” or “ordinary” to integrating the sound of harmonics. The following example shows how Fuentes employs this technique in *Primer Interludio* with the help of a horizontal arrow and specifying the range of time (in seconds) in which the change should occur (example 3.1). This new technique and music notation were rarely found in Mexican guitar music before the last decade of the twentieth century.

Example 3.1 from third movement of *Primer Interludio* (rehearsal N. 46):

Additionally, the gradual change from one type of sound to another is found in Vázquez’ *Elegía 2*. Furthermore, Vázquez develops a technique commonly used in popular guitar music called hammering. Hammering refers to the act of hammering or hitting the strings against the fingerboard of the guitar with both hands (example 3.2). It is also referred to as tapping and was first used by rock and blues guitar players. This technique is encountered in Enríquez *Tres Instantáneas* as well. Vázquez, like Fuentes, utilizes a horizontal arrow to show the gradual change from one type of sound to the other. Although the gradual change of sound in both of these pieces is a shared concept, it

is not used in the exact same manner. One difference is that Fuentes changes from ordinary sound to the sound of harmonics, whereas Vázquez changes from ordinary sound to hammering and vice versa. The latter aspect further separates the manner in which the two composers approach this technical feature. Vázquez' change of sound from ordinary to hammering is always accompanied by a crescendo, as well as his transformation from hammering to ordinary is, conversely, always accompanied by a decrescendo. Fuentes' *Primer Interludio* only renders changes from ordinary sound to harmonics and is not always associated with a crescendo or decrescendo. Moreover, he incorporates only the hammering technique to create *sbarrato*, but not the pull-off that Vázquez includes in his *Elegía 2*. *Sbarrato* is a term Fuentes uses to request less pressure of the left hand when pressing the strings against the fretboard (Examples 3.11, 5.5 and 7.1). Fuentes constantly entwines the use of pull-off/hammering throughout his entire piece.

Example 3.2 from page 9 of *Elegía 2*:

Additionally, in Ana Lara's *Haikus* we find a closely related use of hammering in the fifth movement. In here the technique is in fact directly connected to the conventional

pull-off and hammering found in classical guitar music. This effect is done with the left hand only. Lara extends this feature by employing it continuously throughout the entire fifth *Haiku* (example 3.3).

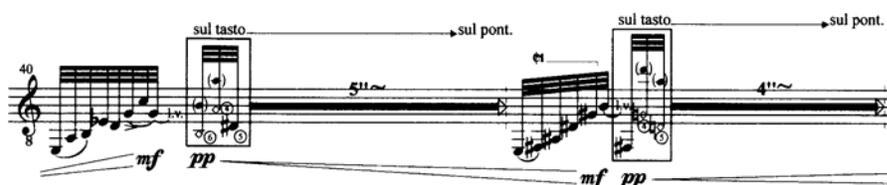
Example 3.3 from the fifth movement of *Haikus*:

The image displays two staves of musical notation. The first staff is in treble clef with a common time signature (C) and is labeled 'mano sinistra' and 'mp'. It contains a continuous sequence of eighth notes, with some notes marked with a sharp sign (#). The second staff is also in treble clef and contains a similar sequence of eighth notes, with some notes marked with a sharp sign (#) and a flat sign (b). The notation is dense and rhythmic, illustrating the technique of pull-off and hammering.

Another type of extended technique is the manner in which Fuentes interweaves harmonics into the rapid flow of ordinary sounds (examples 3.12 and 4.2). This element is also found in bar 71 of Ortiz' *Sydolira*, and occurs in a more traditional way in Vázquez' *Sonata* (opening page) as well as in the earlier work by Enriquez *Tres Instantáneas*. In some instances Ana Lara apparently employs the harmonics in a more traditional mode in her *Haikus*, but stretches this technique by providing an entire movement written solely with harmonics, which is unconventional. Additionally, Fuentes manipulates the harmonics in a distinctive style by enclosing them with ordinary sounds in a repeating cell. These cells always contain three notes, two

harmonics and one ordinary sound; creating a unique and innovative constant interchange of these two types of sounds (examples 3.1, 3.4 & 4.1).

Example 3.4 from the third movement of *Primer Interludio* (rehearsal N 40):



Another common trait found in guitar music written by Arturo Fuentes' Mexican Contemporaries is the use of *dedillo*, a tremolo-like technique that is generally performed with the index or middle finger of the right hand (examples 3.5 through 3.10). This technique is used in flamenco guitar music and was also a common practice in the vihuela technique of the sixteenth century.

Right-hand technique was dealt with in some detail, especially for the playing of rapid passages known as *redobles*. Three methods are given. *Dedillo* (marked *dedi* in some sources) consists of a rapid movement inwards and outwards with the index finger.²

The manner in which these Mexican composers incorporate the use of *dedillo* differs from the approach used in sixteenth century performance practice. None of these Mexican composers uses *dedillo* to play rapid passages. Enriquez' employs *dedillo* in each of his *Tres Instantáneas*. In several of these Mexican works there are many occasions in which the repetition of a note in one or more strings progresses into the use of *dedillo*, as seen in *Sydolira* by Gabriela Ortiz (example 3.6) and in Vázquez'

² Poulton, Diana and Alcalde C., Antonio. "Vihuela: Technique and Performing Practice." *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy. <http://www.grovemusic.com> (Accessed 17 January 2007).

Sonata (example 3.7) Furthermore, the *dedillo* frequently turns into, or is incorporated as a *rasgueado* as found in Ana Lara's *Haikus*, González Compeán's *Impello* (example 3.8) and Ortiz' *Sydolira* (example 3.10).

Example 3.5 from the second & third movements of *Tres Instantáneas*:

Musical notation for Example 3.5. The top staff is labeled "tremolo dolce" and features a long, sweeping melodic line with a tremolo effect. The dynamics are marked *pp* at the beginning and *p* at two points later. The bottom staff shows a bass line with a tremolo effect.

Musical notation for Example 3.5. The top staff is labeled "Lentamente tremolo, rasgueando e glissando." and features a tremolo effect with a glissando. The dynamics are marked *ff*. The bottom staff shows a bass line with a tremolo effect.

Example 3.6 from bar 183 of *Sydolira*:

Musical notation for Example 3.6. The top staff is labeled "poco a poco accel." and "molto allegro, sempre ritmico". The dynamics are marked *f* and *fff*. The bottom staff shows a bass line with a tremolo effect. The tempo is marked *p = 168*. The passage is marked "nat" and "sul pont". The dynamics are marked *p cresc. poco a poco*.

Example 3.7 from first movement of *Sonata* (page 8):

Handwritten musical score for Example 3.7. The score is divided into two systems. The top system shows a guitar part (left) and a piano part (right). The guitar part is on a single staff with a wavy line above it, and the piano part is on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 50$. The guitar part has a 'cresc.' marking below it. The piano part has a 'sempre tutta' marking below it. The guitar part is marked with circled numbers 4, 5, and 6. The piano part is marked with circled numbers 4, 5, and 6. The guitar part has a 'cresc.' marking below it. The piano part has a 'sempre tutta' marking below it.

Example 3.8 from first movement of *Impello*:

Handwritten musical score for Example 3.8. The score is on a single staff with various markings including 'cresc. sempre', 'velocissimo', 'trémolo unisone', and 'gliss.'. The dynamics range from *fff* to *p*. The score includes circled numbers 1 and 2, and a circled number 4. The score is marked with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Enriquez creates an interesting effect by using the *dedillo* while bending two strings, which slowly raises the pitch of these notes, while keeping a third string with a steady pitch. Bending is a technique in which the strings are pulled up or down against the fingerboard, which consequently shifts the pitch. Vázquez also uses bending at the

beginning of his *Sonata*. In addition, Arturo Fuentes integrates the tremolo technique in various ways. One approach is by writing a tremolo on one note and indicating to play the repetition of this note over two or three strings, that is to say by crossing-strings. The performer will be actually playing an arpeggio of a unison played on adjacent strings, or alternating this unison on two consecutive strings (examples 3.1 through 3.9). The features of *tremolo-dedillo* of a unison in two adjacent strings and *tremolo-rasgueado* are also encountered in *Impello* by González Compeán (example 3.8).

Example 3.9 from third movement of *Primer Interludio* (rehearsal N. 16):

In some instances Fuentes creates an interesting sound effect with a tremolo performed between two notes that are a minor second apart; this is analogous to the *dedillo* or tremolo of a minor second found in the second movement of Enriquez' composition as well as in Ortiz' *Sydolira* (bar 52, example 3.10). Vázquez creates a similar sound with a tremolo or *dedillo* with two notes that are a major second or a minor ninth apart and played on adjacent strings.

Example 3.10 from *Sydolira*:

51
 senza tempo, accel. molto ♩ = 112-116
 tastiera → pont → nat
 fff pp sffp sffp sffp sffp

Ana Lara incorporates the use of the *dedillo* with harmonics and takes a further step by indicating the use of *piel* (flesh) and thus distinguishing the subtle difference between two types of sound color that can be employed to perform this technique: nail and flesh. The use of flesh when performing *dedillo* creates a softer, darker and warmer sound, whereas the use of nail renders a brighter and louder sound. Furthermore, Lara extends the *dedillo* technique to the point of composing the entire eighth *Haiku* using this specific technique. It is appropriate to mention here that Hebert Vázquez composed his first *Elegía* (1988) using only *dedillo* technique throughout the entire piece.

In the finale of *Primer Interludio*, Fuentes stretches the guitar technique by creating a multi-layered gesture of four different musical elements occurring simultaneously. One, the dynamic crescendo; two, the glissando of the left hand across the fingerboard; three, the gradual change from ordinary sound to *sul ponticello* of the right hand, and four, producing the *sbarrato* sound effect that eventually changes to ordinary sound. To perform this multi-layered gesture the guitarist has to isolate each musical element and practice it individually, to subsequently set them together to create the desired effect (Example 3.11).

Example 3.11 from the Finale of *Primer Interludio* (Rehearsal 99):

An interesting and creative expansion to the well-known technique of glissando, frequently used in guitar music, is found in several of these Mexican contemporary works. For example, in the opening notes of the second movement of *Primer Interludio* Fuentes creates an ingenious musical gesture by writing a glissando on the sixth string of the guitar. The left hand performs this glissando, while the right hand plays an *arpeggio* pattern simultaneously; therefore, bifurcating the phrase into two superimposed musical elements (example 3.12). Vázquez also expands the ordinary use of glissando. In page twelve of his *Sonata*, he provides two metered and synchronized glissandi on the fourth and fifth strings (example 3.13). It seems coincidental that the glissandi found in these two pieces occur within a major third. However, these two composers have a slightly different approach to this technique. With the exception of Ana Lara's *Haikus*, all of these composers employ the use of glissandi in their music discussed herein.

Example 3.12 from *Primer Interludio* (Rehearsals N19):

Example 3.13 from the second movement of *Sonata*:

A subtle but fascinating feature observed in Hebert Vázquez' *Sonata* (page six), and in Gabriela Ortiz' *Sydolira* is the way in which two notes are slurred. In these music examples the note that is being slurred or hammered, which naturally tends to have a lighter articulation, is juxtaposed with another starting melodic line or gesture above or below the note. The sound that ends is in direct counterpart to the one that begins. This means that the performer has to pluck the new, starting note, with the right hand at the same time that the left hand hammers the second note of the slurred pair. Vázquez extends this concept in his *Sonata* by asking the performer to pluck a counter note against the third note of a rapidly passing set of four hammered notes (example 3.14).

Example 3.14 from the second movement of *Sonata* (pages 6 & 18):

The image displays two systems of handwritten musical notation. The top system features two staves. The upper staff contains a sequence of beamed eighth notes, with a circled '3' above the final measure. The lower staff shows a melodic line starting with a circled '4', followed by a slur and the word 'poco' written below the staff. The bottom system also consists of two staves. The upper staff has a melodic line with slurs and accents, and the lower staff has a rhythmic accompaniment with beamed eighth notes and slurs. Both systems include dynamic markings such as 'poco' and 'p'.

Other music notation elements found in nearly all of these Mexican works are mentioned in later sections; including the chapter devoted to percussive elements as well as the following: a) what may be considered the standard way to depict gradual *accelerando* and *ritardando* graphically; and b) a form of *acciaccaturas*, or group of notes meant to be played as fast as possible. These groups of sounds are written in smaller size notes with a line through.

4. INNOVATIVE TIMBRES

Timbre is one of the musical elements that make the guitar a unique and interesting instrument. A fascinating feature of contemporary guitar music is the extensive use of timbres. New timbres are widely found in the web of sounds rendered in the Mexican compositions discussed in this research project. The novelties of sounds heard in these pieces are but a subtle expansion to the already extensive inventory of established timbres in the classical guitar repertoire.

Timbre appears as a unifying element in many of these works. For instance, constantly changing sound colors, the extended use of harmonics, *sul tasto* and *sul ponticello* create both variation and unity, variation in sound and texture, and unity by binding the different movements or parts.

An innovative timbre in Fuentes *Primer Interludio* can be found in the way he incorporates harmonics into repetitive cells. Combining harmonics with ordinary sounds in a recurring manner creates a distinctive timbre. As seen in example 3.4 of the previous section devoted to extended techniques. Additionally, Fuentes renders new and interesting timbres with the use of the *sbarrato* technique; by means of playing the guitar with less pressure of the left hand when pressing the strings against the fretboard (Examples 3.11, 5.5 and 7.1).

A feature found in various works is the gradual change of a number of musical elements. For example, the gradual change of color from *sul tasto* to *sul ponticello* to ordinary (normal sound) or, as mentioned earlier, the gradual change between harmonics and percussive sounds to normal sounds, which creates unique and unusual timbres. These techniques require a detailed approach from the performer. The gradual change from *sul tasto* to *sul ponticello* to ordinary required and written by the composer, as opposed to the one left to the performer as part of his or her interpretation, is frequently found in several of these Mexican guitar compositions. However, the extended treatment of this musical element that Fuentes renders by providing a measured transformation (in seconds) from *sul tasto* to *sul ponticello* to ordinary is not commonly observed in other works. These gradual and subtle changes are found in six of the seven parts of *Primer Interludio*, and may be considered as one of the unifying elements throughout the entire work. The following example shows the manner in which Fuentes writes the gradual change of sound color, while gradually incorporating harmonics:

Example 4.1 from the third movement of *Primer Interludio* (Rehearsal 43):

The image shows a musical score for a guitar piece, specifically Example 4.1 from the third movement of *Primer Interludio* (Rehearsal 43). The score is written on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/8 time signature. The piece begins at rehearsal mark 43. The initial section is marked *sul tasto* and features a triplet of eighth notes with dynamics *p*, *m*, and *i*. A wavy line labeled "gradually to the harmonics" indicates a transition to the next section, which is marked *sul pont*. This section starts with a triplet of eighth notes, including a natural sign (♮) and a *p* dynamic, and is marked *pp*. The final section is marked "ord." (ordinary) and features a triplet of eighth notes with a *mf* dynamic, leading to a final triplet marked *sfz*.

The transformation of a unison, played on two adjacent strings, into harmonics creates an auditory effect of unique qualities (example 3.1). In this case, a repeating G note that is heard for four seconds transforms into a circling *arpeggio* pattern of three notes, E and D played as harmonics and the continuation of the same G heard earlier that is not played as a harmonic. This alteration occurs as the tone color is gradually changed from ordinary to *sul tasto*.

Primer Interludio is imbued with original sounding gestures. For instance, the ear is guided to distinctive nuances of sound in rehearsal thirty-eight of the third movement of Fuentes' composition. Here an open D on the fourth string is followed by two hammered notes on the same string, F sharp and G on the fourth and fifth frets respectively. The ending note G of this gesture becomes a tremolo in unison played on adjacent strings; that is, on the fourth and third (played open) strings.

A great example of the variety of innovative timbres found in the music of these Mexican composers is found in the second movement of Fuentes *Primer Interludio* (example 4.2). In a short time of period, he employs a number of musical gestures imbued with an array of delicate timbres. Furthermore, the carefully crafted repetition of a unison on alternate strings throughout the entire *Primer Interludio*, be it on one, two or more strings, renders a timbre that can also be perceived as a unifying element in this work. One such example is observed in the sixth movement where two A notes are

plucked simultaneously on the sixth string (fifth fret) and the fifth string (open) while this A note is repeated and interchanged with a B note on the sixth string.

Example 4.2 from the second movement of *Primer Interludio* (rehearsal 22):

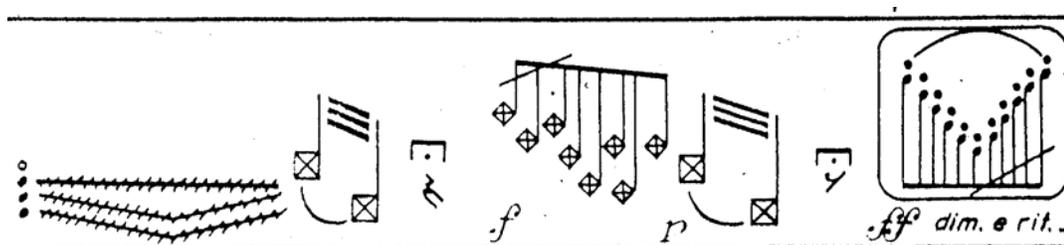
Ana Lara provides an interesting timbre in her fourth *Haiku*. In this movement, she incorporates the use of harmonics into the percussive element of *tambura*. In the same movement, and as mentioned before, a tremolo of harmonics is provided in addition to the timbral distinction of *piel* (flesh) which in turn implies the use of *uña* (nail); these timbral nuances create delicate sound effects. Enríquez as well specifies to play “with the nails;” nevertheless, he incorporates this in a different context.

Example 4.3 from the fourth *Haiku*:

Enríquez' composition is full of innovative and experimental timbres, such as playing the strings behind the frets or beyond the bridge, the use of *pizzicato a la Bartok*,

snapping the fingers while playing, tapping the fingerboard with the fingers, tapping the strings with the right hand (*tambura*) or bending the strings while performing a *tremolo-dedillo*. Examples 1.3 on page six and 4.4 below show the richness and variety of sounds that Enríquez uses in his *Tres Instantáneas*.

Example 4.4 from the first movement of *Tres Instantáneas*:



In *Haiku* number eight, a particular timbre effect is found through the manner in which the tremolo technique, described earlier as *dedillo*, is manipulated. In this movement, Lara begins with a tremolo on one string and slowly adds more strings, ending as full all-strings *rasgueado*; offering the listener a landscape of an unusual continuum of sounds. This technique is used in a very similar fashion by Vázquez (example 3.7), Enríquez (example 3.5), Compeán (example 3.8), and Ortiz (bar 61).

Elegía 2 develops the tapping/hammering and pull-off technique in depth. In the course of this work, due to the manner in which he employs this tapping technique, Vázquez provides an array of new timbres (Examples 1.2, 3.2, 5.1 and 7.2).

5. RHYTHMIC COMPLEXITY

The fabric of sounds encountered in these Mexican compositions contains a considerable amount of rhythmic complexity. Such works as Vázquez' *Elegía 2*, Fuentes' *Primer Interludio*, Ortiz' *Sydolira*, Lara's *Haikus* and Compeán's *Impello* provide examples of rhythmic complexity.

Elegía 2 is written in two staves and Vázquez' presents rather complex rhythmic passages and incorporates metric modulation; as seen in the phrase encountered in the third system of page eight. Here, changing meters occur from a measure of $6/4 + 1/8$ to a $6/8$ on one staff against a $3/4$ on the second staff, plus a complex rhythmic value ratio of $9:8$ occurs in a group of sixteenth notes. The following is an example of the rhythmic complexity employed by Vázquez in his *Elegía 2*:

Example 5.1 from *Elegía 2* (page eight):

The image shows a musical score for two staves, labeled 'm.d.' (measures) and 'm.s.' (measures). The notation is complex, featuring various rhythmic values and metric modulations. A bracket above the first staff indicates a $9:8$ ratio for a group of sixteenth notes. The score includes treble clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and various time signatures such as $6/4$, $1/8$, $6/8$, and $3/4$. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings like mf and mf .

Additionally, Vázquez uses a considerable level of rhythmic complexity in his *Sonata*. This work, like *Elegía 2*, is mostly written using two staves and provides opposing rhythms in a polyrhythmic and polymetric context (examples 3.14 & 5.2).

Example 5.2 from *Sonata* (Page 20):

In *Sydolira*, Ortiz' writes constantly changing meters that present the guitarist with an intricate and unstable rhythmic ground (Example 5.3). *Impello's* rhythmic layout renders constantly changing gestures that are difficult to perform on the guitar (example 5.4). Additionally, Fuentes' *Primer Interludio* provides ample examples of rhythmic complexity; one such example is found in the finale movement (Example 5.5). All of these examples require a meticulous approach from the performer. Furthermore, nearly all the guitar compositions discussed herein provide ample instances of asymmetrical meters and ametric (non-metered) composition (all but Ana Lara).

Example 5.3 from *Sydolira* (bars 84-90):

Example 5.4 from *Impello* (page 11):Example 5.5 from *Primer Interludio* (rehearsal 66):Musical notation for Example 5.5 from *Primer Interludio* (rehearsal 66). The score is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). It begins with a piano (**p**) dynamic. The first measure has a half note chord with a sharp sign above it. The second measure has a half note chord with a sharp sign above it. The third measure has a half note chord with a sharp sign above it. The fourth measure has a half note chord with a sharp sign above it. The fifth measure has a half note chord with a sharp sign above it. The sixth measure has a half note chord with a sharp sign above it. The seventh measure has a half note chord with a sharp sign above it. The eighth measure has a half note chord with a sharp sign above it. The ninth measure has a half note chord with a sharp sign above it. The tenth measure has a half note chord with a sharp sign above it. The dynamic changes to **mf** in the fifth measure. The dynamic changes to **f** in the eighth measure. The piece ends with a final chord. The score includes various performance instructions: "ord." above the first measure, "gliss." above the second measure, "Lv." above the fifth measure, "sul pont." above the eighth measure, and "rall" above the tenth measure. There are also circled numbers 1 and 2 above some notes, and a circled number 2 above a note in the tenth measure.

6. RAPIDLY CHANGING DYNAMICS

The music discussed in this dissertation by Arturo Fuentes, Manuel Enríquez, Gabriela Ortiz and Francisco Javier González Compeán incorporate quick dynamic changes. The two examples presented below (examples 6.1 and 6.2) provide clear instances of this musical feature.

In his *Primer Interludio*, Fuentes asks for eight rapid dynamic changes within a couple of musical gestures (rehearsal 96). This level of dynamic detail is one of a variety of multilayered musical elements that include rhythmic complexity and gradual sound color change occurring simultaneously.

Example 6.1 from the Finale of *Primer Interludio* (rehearsal 96):

The image shows a musical score for guitar, rehearsal 96. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music begins with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a *sul tasto* instruction. It features a series of rapid dynamic changes: *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *sfz*, *f*, *pp*, *f*, and *mf*. The score includes various performance instructions such as *ord.* (order), *l.v.* (left hand), *sul tasto*, and *sul pont.* (sul ponticello). There are also several fingering diagrams and circled numbers (1, 2, 3) indicating specific fingerings for the notes. The music is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns and a rapid sequence of dynamic shifts.

Enríquez incorporates rapid dynamic changes in the first movement of his *Tres Instantáneas*. He creates contrast between opposing dynamic intensities through interplay of rapidly passing musical gestures and sound effects. Ana Lara's *Haikus* and Hebert Vazquez' *Sonata* and *Elegía 2* do not incorporate rapidly changing dynamics.

7. PERCUSSIVE EFFECTS

As mentioned earlier, Arturo Fuentes employs *sbarrato* in *Primer Interludio*: a percussive-like effect produced by releasing some of the pressure of the left hand when pressing the strings on the fingerboard (examples 3.11 and 7.1).

Example 7.1 from the fifth movement of *Primer Interludio* (Rehearsal 69):

The image shows a musical score for a guitar. It features a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is divided into two parts. The first part, starting at rehearsal mark 69, is marked with a dynamic of *mf* (mezzo-forte). The second part, enclosed in a rectangular box, is marked with a dynamic of *pp* (pianissimo) and a tempo change to *a tempo x2*. The notation includes various string techniques such as hammer-ons, pull-offs, and slurs, indicated by 'x' marks and circled numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) above the notes. A circled 'cs' is also present above a note in the second part.

This technique is directly associated to the hammering/tapping technique (percussive-like effect) that Hebert Vázquez uses in his *Elegía 2* (example 7.2). In these two compared works, both composers incorporate the use of pitched percussion sounds produced by hammering the strings against the fingerboard; as well as the gradual change, from “normal” sound to hammering (Vázquez), and from “normal” to harmonics (Fuentes). Additionally, Enríquez also incorporates the use of tapping the fingerboard in his *Tres Instantáneas*.

Example 7.2 from *Elegía 2*:

The image shows a musical score for Example 7.2 from *Elegía 2*. It consists of two staves: the upper staff is labeled 'm.d.' (mandala) and the lower staff is labeled 'm.s.' (mandala). The music is in 12/8 time, with a tempo marking of ♩ = 138. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score features a series of notes in the m.d. staff, with 'x' marks above them indicating percussive effects. The word 'hammering' is written below the m.d. staff. The m.s. staff has 'x' marks below it, indicating percussive sounds. A circled '2' is above the first measure, and a circled '4' is below the first measure. The dynamic marking 'ppp' is written below the m.s. staff. A long horizontal line with an arrow at the end spans across the top of the score, and another long horizontal line with an arrow at the end spans across the bottom of the score.

Such a work as Ortiz' *Sydolira* incorporates a number of percussive effects. A similar feature to the *sbarrato* effect used by Fuentes is found in bar twenty-nine of *Sydolira*. Ortiz uses this trait in several occasions in her composition. She writes the word "stroke" on top of sound clusters, but she does not provide detailed performance instructions. Nevertheless, it is clear that this effect should be performed by either realizing the pressure of the left hand or by dampening the strings with one finger or the palm of the right hand while hitting the strings. The notes of these clusters are notated as percussive sounds with an "x" in the same manner that Fuentes writes his *sbarrato* and Vázquez notates his hammering effect (examples 7.1 and 7.2 respectively).

One feature common to most of these compositions that Fuentes and Lara do not incorporate in their music is the use of *pizzicato a la Bartok*. The use of *tambura* is widely heard in *Tres Instantáneas*, *Elegía 2* and *Haikus*. Additionally, considerable use of *rasgueados* is a common trait found in all of these six Mexican works. The almost percussive-like manner of strumming sound clusters is brought into play in a similar fashion by these composers. Moreover, Gabriela Ortiz and Manuel Enríquez incorporate

percussive sounds by using the body of the guitar as a percussion instrument (see example 4.4 in page 36).

8. REPETITIVE RHYTHMIC AND/OR MELODIC CELLS

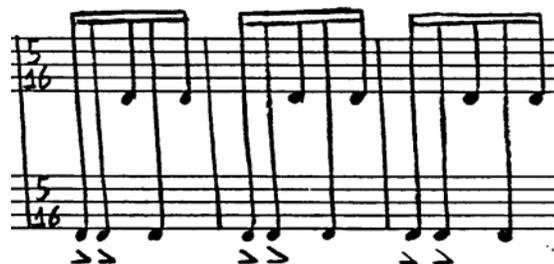
A common feature found in these works is the repetition of motives or cells. This compositional feature creates an interesting musical texture or gesture. Fuentes incorporates a considerable amount of repetitive cells in his *Primer Interludio* (example 8.1). Enríquez includes rhythmic and melodic cells in *Tres Instantáneas* (example 8.2) and other composers like Vázquez and Lara, choose to write the repetitive motives or cells as many times as they occur; instead of placing the repeated material in a box with a number indicating how many times it should be played (example 8.3).

Example 8.1 from *Primer Interludio* (Rehearsal # 10):

The musical score for Example 8.1 consists of five measures. Measure 8 is marked *pp* and *sul tasto x2*. Measure 9 is marked *f* and *ord.*. Measure 10 is marked *f* and *ord.*. Measure 11 is marked *f* and *ord.*. Measure 12 is marked *pp* and *sul tasto x7*. The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets and slurs.

Example 8.2 from *Tres Instantáneas*:

The musical score for Example 8.2 consists of one measure, 8a, marked *pp* and *IX*. The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, with some slurs and accents.

Example 8.3 from *Sonata* (page 15):

Within the aleatoric character of his guitar composition, Enríquez extends the concept of repetition to entire music blocks or systems. Subsequently, allowing the performer to choose at random the groups of motives to repeat as well as for how long they will be repeated within a set duration.

9. ATONALITY

The compositions discussed herein lack tonal center, or key. In this sense, atonality is a common trait, in that there is no hierarchy of pitches focusing on a single and central tone. The harmony encountered is non-functional and it tends to be relegated to secondary importance as compared with the linear or motivic development. Furthermore, it is nearly irrelevant to discuss harmonic or melodic direction in Enriquez' *Tres Instantáneas* for its aleatoric nature.

The pitch-class Eb plays an important role in *Primer Interludio* and *Haikus*. As mentioned earlier, *Fuentes* drops the first string of the guitar from E to Eb for the entire piece. Ana Lara detunes the low E, sixth string, to Eb as well in her sixth *Haiku*. Through this process of altering the tuning of the E strings of the guitar known as *scordatura*, Lara extends the range of sounds of the guitar by one semitone while *Fuentes* reduces it by one semitone. Nevertheless, while in both compositions the Eb plays an important role, it does not function as a tonal center. Manuel Enriquez' and Hebert Vázquez provide some instances of microtonal material through the guitar technique of bending the strings described earlier. *Fuentes* provides a playful ending to his *Primer Interludio* by leaving two sustained notes, low E and G sharp, which suggests an E major triad.

Other common traits found in the music of these Mexican composers include the use of sound clusters, fragmentation of motivic material, motive development, the use of unordered pitch class interval 6 (augmented fourth) and unordered pitch class interval 1

and 2 (minor and major seconds). Unity brought about by the use of motivic material is another feature common to these compositions, as well as the use of a wide registral space of the guitar.

When perceived from the point of view of a large formal structure, there are both variations and similarities between these guitar works. Fuentes divides his *Primer Interludio* into seven parts that are practically intended to be performed as one. He writes *attacca* at the end of each movement, so there is almost no pause in between movements. Each movement is woven into the next one and by doing so the composer links the parts creating less defined ending and beginning of sections, thus providing a sense of unity to the entire piece. This feature is also found in all of the movements of González Compeán's *Impello* as well as in Vázquez' two-part *Sonata*. Enríquez and Compeán divide their works in three movements, *Elegía 2* and *Sydolira* are composed in one movement and there are eight *Haikus* in Lara's work.

10. CONCLUSION

Through this research project, I have associated certain stylistic characteristics, by comparative analysis, between several contemporary Mexican composers. Therefore, I have been able to get a glimpse of some of the underlying stylistic unities found in these Mexican guitar compositions that seem rather separate.

There are a number of stylistic traits common to all of the composers discussed herein as well as few characteristics where only some of them converge. However, this research shows that Arturo Fuentes' *Primer Interludio* is representative of a variety of contemporary features commonly found in guitar music written by Mexican contemporaries from 1988 to 2003.

Features that are common to all of these composers include the use of complex musical notation, highly disjunct melodic contours, extended techniques, innovative timbres, rhythmic complexity, percussive effects, repetitive rhythmic and/or melodic cells/motives and atonality. Conversely, the characteristic of rapidly changing dynamics is found in Arturo Fuentes', Manuel Enríquez', Gabriela Ortiz' and Francisco Javier González Compeán's compositions, but not in Ana Lara's and Hebert Vazquez' guitar works.

Another common aspect observed in the works of these composers is the tendency to incorporate innovative traits not usually found in guitar music. In the majority of these

compositions a profound knowledge of the guitar's capabilities is imminent and a desire to stretch them is perceived. There is clearly an underlying desire to expand the technical possibilities of the guitar.

This research will presumably affect the performance of *Primer Interludio* or any of the compositions included herein. By means of stressing the discovered stylistic features, guitarists might be able to provide more contrast to the performance of the pieces: richness and shades in sounds, harmonies, sound clusters, tones, rhythms, timbres, dynamics and tempos. It is my hope that anyone intending to perform the guitar works included in this dissertation may find this research helpful to render a more informed and accurate performance. Furthermore, I hope this research aids the process of unraveling commonalities in contemporary Mexican guitar music at the turn of the twenty-first century.

There is a vast number of Mexican guitar works created in recent years that remain unknown in today's classical music world, academic community and general public. Mexico possesses a large repertoire of guitar music for solo guitar and guitar with a wide array of ensemble combinations from duets to large ensembles and guitar concertos. Many of these works would undoubtedly challenge a performer of the highest caliber.

I believe this research project will promote contemporary Mexican classical guitar music and provide a helpful source for any musician interested in knowing, approaching or playing this style of music. I hope to awake interest in Mexican music and to encourage other musicians to include Mexican works in their concert repertoire.

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