

Master of Music (Research) Portfolio

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This portfolio contains a recital performance of 65 minutes duration given on 8 October 2014 and a 15,000-word thesis presented by Naomi Smout in fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Music (Research) at The University of Western Australia.

1.1. Creative Component: Master's Recital

The creative component of this proposed study is a recital of solo piano pieces of 65 minutes' duration¹. The pieces selected for the performance have more significance than simply evidencing technical ability. Part of obtaining this Master's degree requires that I submit a thesis and that my performance practice also relates to the component. The chosen topic of my thesis is that of performing and interpreting twentieth-century Argentine piano music, focusing on how composers sought to integrate folk dance rhythms and national characteristics into their works. In particular, I focus on how the iconic image of the *gaucho* (cowboy), the legendary figure of the Argentinian plains, inspired composers to portray *gaucho* characteristics in their music in order to establish an 'Argentinian' art music.

In addition to presenting a selection of piano pieces by Argentine composers, I also include a work by the French composer, Maurice Ravel. By commencing the recital with Ravel, I seek to highlight the connection between French and Argentine music, as each of the Argentine composers featured in the recital studied music in France at some point in their career. The theme of dance rhythms also links the Ravel waltzes to the chosen Argentine piano works. Inspired by Schubert's *Valses Nobles* and *Valses Sentimentales* (Op. 77 and Op. 50), Ravel's *Valses* ('Waltzes') are characterised by a 'lilting and distinctive Viennese rhythm' (Dowling 1994: 1). As a result, the waltzes set the scene for the Argentine piano works that follow. Following Ravel's *Valses Nobles y Sentimentales* (1911) is Floro Ugarte's *Romantico* (prelude, 1947) and *Suite de Mi Tierra* (1923).

Born in Buenos Aires, Ugarte studied composition in Paris with Albert Lavignac. Upon returning to Argentina, Ugarte became principal organiser and conductor of the Colon Theatre, The National Society of Music, and the Superior School of Fine Arts of the University of La Plata. This prelude is the third of five preludes called *Cinco Preludios*

¹ The DVD of the Recital is attached to the final page of this portfolio.

composed in 1947. It evokes the melancholy and impressions felt of the Argentine countryside. In his *El Rancho Abandonado* (1890), Alberto Williams also sought to promote his Argentine musical heritage, finding inspiration in the Argentine countryside and the *gauchos* (cowboys). Composed in 1890, *El Rancho Abandonado* reflects Williams' inspiration from a typical Argentine country scene and the nostalgia of the *gauchos*. It is a part of the suite *En La Sierra*, Op. 32, which was first performed by the composer himself.

In addition to performing the aforementioned works, the recital also includes Piazzolla's *Tango Invierno Porteno* (1970) and *Balada para un loco* (1969). Piazzolla is credited with transforming traditional tango music (the popular dance music of Argentina) from the dance floor to the concert stage. He did this by incorporating elements of jazz, classical and tango music. The final work in the recital is the Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 22, (1952) by Alberto Ginastera, one of the most important Latin American composers. The piano sonata is influenced by Argentine folk dance rhythms. It is composed in the style of the *malambo*, a traditional folk dance on the Argentine countryside that depicts men fighting against attacks on their property; fighting for their land. It is a men-only dance based entirely on rhythm. The men make a loud tapping noise as they strike their gaucho boots on the ground. The *malambo* involves energetic, complex moves with intricate footwork difficult to master and is a competition between the gaucho dancers. This is exemplified in the first and fourth movements. The above pieces were chosen because they highlight the influence of national folk music and dance elements in twentieth-century Argentine piano works. The works by Ginastera and Piazzolla also reveal the influence of the *gaucho* and tango music and dance in Argentinian art music.

1.2. Written Component: Thesis

Confessions and Reflections on Performing
Twentieth-century Argentine Piano Music

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Introduction

This study seeks to make an original contribution to the fields of music performance studies and auto-ethnography by examining my experiences of learning twentieth-century Argentine piano music in Perth, Western Australia, and New York, US, during a two-year period in order to understand how to effectively perform such repertoire according to the composer's intentions. Such a process involved investigating folklore influences and nationalist debates that inspired Argentine composers to produce their piano works. For instance, early Argentine pianists and composers, such as Alberto Williams (1862-1952) and Floro Ugarte (1884-1975), sought to portray a specific Argentine identity in their music. This was accomplished by drawing inspiration from the *gaucho* (cowboy) figure of the Argentinian *pampas* (plains), as well as utilising dance 'Argentinian' forms, for example, the *gato* and tango (Schwartz-Kates 2004: 253). As symbols of the Argentine nation, the *gaucho* and the tango represent contrasting ideals of Argentine society (Nielsen and Mariotto: 2005: 10, 13, 31). The former represents rural, primitive Argentina, whereas the latter represents urban Argentina and its connections with Europe (Bockleman 2011: 580).² These cultural icons profoundly influenced Argentine composers, including Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983) and Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992), to incorporate folk music elements into their classical piano works (Jackson 2003).³ Consequently, such an understanding informed the performance of the Argentine piano works by Ginastera and Piazzolla. Following, I explored performance practice studies and approaches to twentieth-century Argentine piano music.

² In particular, the tango is associated with Europe and the Parisian upper class that embraced the form in the early twentieth century.

³ For information on performance practice, see Jackson (2003: 1-3).

Piano Performance Practice and Approaching Twentieth-Century Argentine Piano Music

Whilst recent studies exist pertaining to the role of the guitar and flute in Argentine Western art music, of which the guitar is considered the quintessential ‘national’ instrument of Argentina (see *The Guitar Player* 1993, *The Guitar in Continuum Encyclopedia* 2003, Plesch 2009, González 2009), academic research pertaining to contemporary Argentine piano music remains an area ripe for investigation. To date, there exist only reviews of performances by pianists playing Argentine contemporary piano music. Furthermore, a considerable number of these reviews are in Spanish (see Glocer 2011). Such reviews reveal tendencies among some performers to present this music in a ‘loud’ or ‘harsh’ fashion, an approach that reveals a lack of good interpretation and understanding.

Although such reviews contribute to the development of a contemporary Argentine piano music performance practice, more generally, discourses on performance practice with reference to this twentieth-century repertoire are considerably under-developed (Stewart 2004). Consequently, Heaton (2012: 96) states that ‘performance practice in recent contemporary art music is an area that musicology has largely left unexplored. Very few expert performers write about what they do’. We can only speculate as to why this may be the case. Perhaps professional performers do not want to give away their secrets or interpretations in the written word? Or could it be that some performers do not possess competent skills to be able to convincingly communicate what they do through writing? Or perhaps performers consider the notion of writing about performance to be less important, and prefer to hold to the idea that ‘doing’ or ‘performing’ speaks for itself? Thus, there is a need for further academic study vis-à-vis contemporary performance practice by performers themselves. There are, however, some performers who engage in ‘performance as research’, with a notable exception being German pianist Herbert Henck (1980) who writes engagingly

about his approach to performing modern piano works.⁴ By reflecting on his performances, Henck adds depth to his own experience and to the experience of his audience. Thus, this project also aims to do this.

Recent research pertaining to performance practice includes the work of ‘performer-scholars’, such as pianists Barbara Nissman (2002), Charles Rosen (Wyndham 1998, Rosen (2002, 2012) and Roy Howat (1995). Nissman was a professional pianist, Rosen, was a pianist and formidable musicologist, and Howat continues to perform around the world and contribute to music performance research and interpretation. Each of the above performers practised ‘performance as research’. Witten (2003: 1) describes Nissman as ‘the ideal performer/scholar to provide such an in-depth study of Bartók’s complete output for piano’, providing insight into Bartók’s piano pieces from a ‘performer’s point of view’ (Houser 2003: 96). During the 1980s, Nissman also established herself as a ‘champion’ of the piano music of Alberto Ginastera, recording his complete piano music in 1989 (Witten 2003: 1; Vroon 2003). Similarly, Rosen contributed significantly to musicology and performance practice research from a pianist’s perspective (see 1971, 1995, 2001), whereas Howat specialises in the performance and interpretation of French piano music, having studied under Vlado Perlemuter, a student of Maurice Ravel (see Howat 1983, 2009). Thus, the above performers have contributed significantly to performance practice research.

With reference to Argentinian art music, other writers have contributed to an understanding of Ginastera’s piano music (see Shwartz-Kates 2002 and Seeger 1946), providing further insight into the cultural influence of the Argentine *gauchesco* folk tradition on Ginastera’s music. In addition, there exists scholarly research in the Spanish language relating to Argentine composers, including Williams and Ginastera (see Paesky 2007). However, the majority of these works approach the music from a cultural rather than

⁴ In particular, Henck focuses on the piano works of Charles Ives (1874-1954) as well as works by other twentieth-century composers, including John Cage (1912-1992), Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), Frederico Mompou (1893-1987). He has also recorded a number of CDs performing works by Cage and Ives.

performance practice perspective. In order to link theory to practice, and contribute to performance practice research of contemporary Argentine piano music, the current study focuses on the nexus between historical and cultural studies, and performance as research. In particular, the project investigates the piano music of Ginastera and Piazzolla. The influence of the *gaucho*, Argentinian folk dances and Western classical music on Ginastera's piano music will be examined. In addition, and in order to gain a deeper insight into the piano music of Piazzolla, the study considers the influence of tango dance music, jazz music and Western art dance music upon *Nuevo Tango*.⁵ O'Brien (2009: 243) states that 'much of the copious literature devoted to tango tends to emphasize a discussion of either the dance or musical elements at the expense of the other'. Consequently, this project also aims to investigate both the development and influence of tango and folk dance genres on twentieth-century Argentine classical piano music.

Research Aims

The aims of this research are to:

- Investigate the historical development of contemporary Argentine piano music, from its origins in the late nineteenth century, and its association with the *gaucho* tradition, to the development of the genre in the twentieth century by Argentine composers;
- Examine the influence of national Argentine folk music elements, such as the *gaucho* and tango, on Argentine piano music in order to provide an informed performance of works informed by these influences in the recital component for the research; and,

⁵ *Nuevo tango* refers to the new tango style that Piazzolla developed by combining jazz, classical music and tango musical characteristics.

- Critically reflect on the process of playing and performing Argentine piano music, any difficulties encountered, and to examine how I approach and interpret this repertoire.

Methodology

In order to examine the historical development and performance practice of contemporary Argentine piano music, the research employs methods from auto-ethnography and performance studies including: a thorough literature review of relevant existing research; video analysis of myself playing during consultations with Rosa Antonelli, a professional Argentine pianist, performer and teacher who is based in New York, US; interviews with other professionals in this field, including Alberto Ginastera's daughter, Georgina Ginastera; score analysis of works for piano by Ginastera, Piazzolla, Ugarte, Williams and Ravel; and, the keeping of, and reflecting on, a learning journal. In particular, the consultations with Rosa Antonelli in New York contribute significantly to my investigation of the historical development of contemporary Argentine piano music and my performance practice, establishing a thorough grounding and knowledge of this music.

An informal interview with Georgina Ginastera in May 2013 provided me with valuable feedback on my performance of her father's music. Similarly, consultations with Rosa Antonelli address the historical development of Argentine piano music. In addition, the score analysis reveals the influence of folk and Western classical elements on both Ginastera and Piazzolla's music. The significance of New York as the locale in which to conduct fieldwork for this project lies in its relationship and influence on Piazzolla's early years. As a child and teenager, Piazzolla lived in New York. Thus, the musical environment of this city, including the jazz bands active at this time and the classical piano lessons he received, all served to influence Piazzolla's development as a composer (Azzi and Collier 2000: 14). Later

in his career, and after establishing himself as a performer and composer in Paris and Buenos Aires, Piazzolla returned to New York. Cannata (2005: 57) discusses Piazzolla's return to the city and the difficulties he faced in 'making it' as a performer and composer in this context. The significance of undertaking fieldwork in New York, therefore, lies in the influence of the New York musical scene on Piazzolla's formative years of early music training. In addition, Rosa Antonelli continues to perform in New York, including performances at Barnes and Noble and at the world-famous Carnegie Hall. Indeed, and in 2011, she gave the World Premiere of two of Piazzolla's original tangos for piano, *El Mundo de los Dos* (1963) and *Imperial* (1955). Thus, New York was the logical site for fieldwork for this research project.

In order to examine my experiences as a performer-researcher, I kept a learning journal in which I documented my experiences of learning twentieth-century Argentine piano works. The learning journal enabled me to engage in a process of reflective practice, whilst at the same time allowing me to highlight the nexus between music theory and performance practice (see Plack and Greenberg 2005: 1549). In order to accomplish this, this project utilises reflective practice as a means to 'ask probing questions of self and others', as well as to clarify ideas and information which informs my piano playing and gives meaning to these experiences (Lyons 1999: 34; Plack and Greenberg 2005: 1546). This method challenged me to reflect on and consider my experiences through the research process. Lyons (1999: 33) states that such a process encourages one to 'actively construct knowledge about themselves and their practice' which, when applied to theories on performance and reflective practice, clarifies and supports such experiences. As part of this process, it was important for me to reflect on the musical structures that I accepted without question, as well as the 'taken-for-granted assumptions' about the way in which I perform Western art music as a pianist (after Kaisu 2010: 46). How did I come to embrace these ideals? How have they come to influence me? From where did these ideals come (after Inglis 1998: 74)? Following Nissman's (2002)

performer-researcher approach to Bartók's piano music, the project also contributes to developing performance practice discourse pertaining to the contemporary piano music of Ginastera and Piazzolla.

Recent studies mentioned above reveal an increasing interest in music performance practice and research, in which performers seek to communicate the personal stories behind one's creative experiences and connect the personal to the professional (Bartlet and Ellis 2009: 6-7, 13). By reflecting on such existing studies, Bartlet and Ellis (2009: 6) state that 'there is still a musical dimension that remains open for further investigation in auto-ethnography; this is, a dimension that goes beyond text and moves into the auditory world of musical sounds and relationships'. In order to do this, I examine how and why I arrive at particular interpretations of Argentine piano compositions. In addition, I communicate my personal story of my creative experiences in learning and performing Argentine piano music. Integrating information gleaned from video analysis of my playing in consultations with Rosa Antonelli, data drawn from interviews, score analysis and my learning journal, as well as a thorough examination of literature on performance practice, this study aims to provide new and exciting insights into twentieth-century Argentine piano music and its development. I also use the aforementioned methods to examine the influence of Western Classical dances (as evidenced in the music of J. S. Bach, Ravel and Bartók), folk elements in Ginastera's output and the tango in Piazzolla's music, as well as to develop my practice as a performer of this music. Consequently, this research complements the previous work of the above scholars by focusing on issues of performance practice and interpretation.

Outline of the Thesis

This thesis examines my experiences of learning and performing twentieth-century Argentine piano music. Chapter one examines the development of Argentine folk dances and how

Argentine composers integrated the rhythms and imagery associated with regional folklore dances into their piano music. Such an examination then considers the influence of literary writers and nationalist ideology on the folklore movement and Argentine composers. Accordingly, I describe how the folk dance-inspired rhythms and connection with the landscape and *gaucho* (cowboy) of Argentina is significant in the composers' works. In chapter two, I reflect on my experiences of learning twentieth-century Argentine piano music first in Perth, Western Australia, and then in New York, US. In order to examine how my experiences in New York enabled me to develop new approaches to piano performance, I reflect on the physical and mental strategies relating to piano playing that I learned under Rosa Antonelli (2013), and how such strategies enabled me to address 'question spaces' (after Pasler 2008) and 'struggles' (after Denzin 2003) that have arisen in my playing. In chapter three, and in order to document changes that I made in my preparation for the above two performances, and how I adapted a variety of feedback from concert pianists and teachers to inform my interpretation and playing of twentieth-century Argentine piano music, I critically reflect on two recitals that I presented in Perth, Western Australia, following my study in New York. By drawing upon Howat's (1995) thoughts pertaining to interpretation and Rosen's (2004) ideas on the experience of playing the piano, I also consider how by contemplating different physical and interpretative approaches to the music I am now able to identify how my own 'style' of playing has developed during my Masters candidature. The conclusion briefly overviews the thesis and ends by stating that I have established new and more effective approaches to performing piano music in general, as well as an intimate understanding of the Argentine piano music works performed as part of this course of study.

Chapter One:
Historical Overview the Folklore Heritage and National
Ideologies in Argentine Dance and Piano Music

Established as a Spanish colonial power, with significant European immigration, Argentina in the early seventeenth century quickly became a melting pot for a variety of music and dance influences. As a result, the country has its own rich folklore tradition from its indigenous inhabitants, along with a European heritage, with such influences profoundly impacting on the development of twentieth-century Argentine piano music. In order to understand how Argentine composers drew on such influences, and to comprehend how to effectively perform twentieth-century Argentine piano music, it is necessary to examine the development of Argentine folk dances. Such dance forms, including the tango,⁶ and rural folklore dances, such as the *chacarera*, *zamba*, *gato* and *malambo*, exhibit both indigenous and European influences. In order to understand how Argentine composers integrated the rhythms and imagery associated with regional folklore dances into their piano music this chapter explores the evolution of the Argentine folklore movement in the early twentieth century. To do this, the chapter examines the nexus between literary writers and nationalist ideology, and how this affected the development of the Argentine folklore movement. Following, and in order to provide understanding into the musical characteristics of the dances, I discuss each of the aforementioned dance forms in detail. In doing so, I also provide examples from the Argentine piano repertoire that appropriate musical characteristics from folklore dances. Consequently, the chapter contextualises the development of Argentine folklore music and dance, revealing how such developments influenced the growth of Argentine classical piano music. The following discussion begins, however, with some important contextual

⁶ The tango is an urban dance, which developed in the city of Buenos Aires circa 1911. The dance form is most often associated with Argentina outside Latin America.

background information on the development of folklore studies in Latin America that serves to highlight the ways in which scholars apply the term folklore within the Argentine context.

Scholarly Use of the Term ‘Folklore’⁷

In order to construct a sense of Argentine national identity, Argentinian scholars sought to adopt an approach to ‘folklore’ studies in the early twentieth century that enabled them to stand apart from researchers in other Latin American countries (see Paredes 1969: 38). Such an approach was authoritarian and motivated by a sense of national pride (Paredes 1969: 21), with Argentinian folklorists adhering to a ‘coherent theoretical framework’ that enabled them to produce folklore studies to a scholarly competence, distinguishing them from other Latin American countries (Paredes 1969: 38). For example, Argentine folklorist Juan Alfonso Carrizo (1895-1957) founded the Instituto Nacional de la Tradicion in 1943 that produced many contemporaries of a high standard. Nevertheless, despite the high level of scholarly competence, such an approach differed significantly when compared with that adopted by folklorists in North America, and particularly in the US. For example, and prior to the turn of the twentieth century, folklorists in North America sought to preserve folklore by establishing catalogues of recordings and writings on primitive practices, a process that belongs to ethnography (see Paredes 1969: 21, Lomax and Cowell 1942). In contrast, Latin America folklorists actively conducted research with individuals who were either born into or migrated to the region. In doing so, folklorists sought to understand the amalgamation of Spanish, indigenous and African various cultural influences in Latin American cultures rather than

⁷ Folklore refers to the activities, religion, language, nationality and culture characteristic to a particular group of people (Sieling 2003: 1). With reference to folk music, this implies the activities and characteristics of those who actively participate in the folk dances and music. According to Bohlman (2002: 69), folk music is ‘anachronistic, connected primarily to a previous era’, yet lives in the present and is moulded by contemporary events. In light of this, folk music retains a strong link to its origins whilst being very much alive and active in communities today. whilst also shaped by those who actively participate and embody its practices today. In order to comprehend how this process occurs, Bohlman (2003: 55) describes how folklore and music are integrally linked to the history, values, conventions, institutions and technologies that formed them. For example, folk music constitutes that which is an historical tradition, reflecting the influences of its community. Consequently, folk music is the ‘music of the people’ (Seeger quoted in Bohlman 2002: 16).

seeking the ‘survival’ of the indigenous. By drawing on sociological theory and methods to investigate issues pertaining to cultural hybridity and homogeneity, such an approach contrasted greatly with that of North American scholars who tended to investigate ‘cultural liberalism’ or the survival of individualised ethnic communities. However, since the 1980s, US folklore studies have drawn on sociology and anthropology more so than in the early-mid twentieth century. Indeed, Carlson (2011: 3-4) states that the North American conception of folklore studies as a field of study that investigates ‘pre-modern’ societies has gradually shifted as a result of academic influences from sociology and anthropology. Consequently, and by approaching folklore as a process of social construction, rather than historical practice, Latin American folklorists highlight social practices more so than those in North America, US. For example, Argentine folklore is social and geographical and includes not just folksong but also folk dance activities that are unique to a particular ‘region’ and which in turn contribute to an Argentine national identity (Carlson 2011: 9). To understand how twentieth-century Argentine composers appropriated and interpreted national folk influences into their piano music, however, it is necessary to outline the ways in which the Argentine folklore and nationalist movements influenced and shaped national folk dance and music styles.

Argentine Folklore and Nationalism

Developed as a result of interactions between ‘indigenous’ and immigrant populations, folkloric dances, such as the *malambo*, *zamba*, *gato* and *chacarera*, are now considered to be native to Argentina. Indeed, the development of the aforementioned forms also played a key role in establishing a national Argentine identity. Emerging at the turn of the twentieth century, the Argentine nationalist and folklore movements share common ideologies, such as conceiving of ‘the nation as an organic whole intimately related to the soil, the landscape, and

ancient traditions’, an idea taken from German romantic nationalism (Chamosa 2010: 14).⁸ One difference between the two movements, however, is that Argentine nationalists focused on the ‘cowboy’ (*gaucho*) figure of the Argentinian pampas, whereas the folklorists focused on the indigenous and *criollo*⁹ communities. As a result, the Argentine nationalists’ focus on the *gaucho* figure served to strengthen this image as a national icon. In contrast, and by focusing on indigenous and *criollo* communities, folklorists sought to highlight parts of Argentine heritage initially disparaged by upper class European immigrants living in urban contexts in the late nineteenth century.

The History and Development of Argentine Folklore

As an academic field, the study of folklore in Argentina was preceded by the work of nineteenth-century literary writers, such as Jose Hernandez¹⁰ (1834-1886) and Domingo Sarmiento (1811-1888). Such writers utilised indigenous culture, or ‘*criollismo*’, that is, the ‘exaggerated emphasis’ on the native elements in Argentine folklore (Paredes 1969: 37). Accordingly, the Argentine folklore movement serves as both an academic discipline and an artistic form of expression (Chamosa 2010: 7). Chamosa (2010: 3) argues that folklore in

⁸ Many twentieth-century Argentine composers, including Floro Ugarte (1884-1975), Alberto Williams (1862-1949) and Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983), also attempted to articulate the Argentine landscape in their music.

⁹ *Criollismo*, a term first used in literary writings, is built upon the *gaucho* poetry, written by educated writers in the vernacular (local dialect). The genre’s popularity peaked between 1870-1885 with the publication of the poem *The Gaucho Martin Fierro* by Jose Hernandez. Later in the 1880s, circus impresarios adapted the *criollo* poems and stories to dance and music (Chamosa 2010: 23). As a result, it evolved into ‘different forms of performative expression’, such as carnival troupes and social dances, and by the beginning of the twentieth century the literary image of the *gauchos* had become an icon of Argentine nationality (Chamosa 2010: 23). In light of this, *criollismo* embodied romantic notions, such as the ideal Argentinian male character epitomised in the *gaucho* figure. Such a romanticised rendering of the past in which the *gaucho* ‘roamed free and light over the open plains, carrying nothing but a guitar, a fighting knife, and a saddle skirt’ were portrayed by the literary writers (Chamosa 2010: 23). In light of this, *criollismo* served as a ‘precursor of the folklore movement by familiarising Argentine elites with the idea that Argentine nationality was rooted in a rural culture’ and folklorists began to promote this idea in their music and dance (Chamosa 2010: 25).

¹⁰ Both Hernandez and Sarmiento utilised the image of the *gaucho* in their writings to bring about social and economic change in Argentina. Hernandez, who was also a federalist, opposed the modernising, urbanising or ‘Europeanising’ of Argentina. In contrast, Sarmiento promoted immigration and modernisation. Indeed, he greatly influenced nineteenth-century Argentina as an Argentine activist, intellectual, statesman and the seventh president of Argentina.

Argentina developed as a result of a confluence of three main currents: cultural nationalism;¹¹ the roles of regional landowners; and, popular musical artists and producers who popularised genres based on their folk or ‘regional’ music. The confluence of the above currents situate Argentine folklore with the ‘rural peasantry’ of the countryside, which in turn reflects social class divisions that were prevalent in Argentina until the early-to-mid twentieth century (Fogal 1981: 1).¹² As a result, Argentine folklore is defined as the practices (that is, musical, dance, spiritual, and so forth) of the ‘rural peasantry’ or people of the countryside (Fogal 1981: 1).

The 1930s and 1940s witnessed a rapid expansion of Argentine folklore: educated immigrants of English, Spanish and German descent developed a clear direction for the field in Argentina. In particular, the German anthropologist Roberto Lehmann-Nitsche (1872-1938) contributed significantly to the development of ethnology, linguistics, archaeology and folklore in Argentina. Indeed, Lehmann-Nitsche was the first to collect and document sound recordings of folklore activities in rural Argentina.¹³ Such recordings provide valuable insights into the indigenous and *criollo* musical styles practised at this time. As a contemporary of Lehmann-Nitsche, Juan Bautista Ambrosetti (1865-1917) pioneered developments in archaeology and folklore in Argentina. For instance, he conducted ethnographic investigations in the regions of Chaco, Patagonia and Misiones, before specialising in the Northwest of Argentina where archaeological and folkloric observations were made (Chamosa 2010: 27). As a result, the work of Argentine folklore scholars reveals how the local character of particular regions reflects national Argentine ideologies and indigenous culture.

¹¹ Cultural nationalism refers to an intellectual and political movement that began in 1910 and sought to stop the cosmopolitanism of Argentina (Chamosa 2010: 3).

¹² There were three ‘social’ classes: the ‘high’ class (of the city), the ‘peasant’ class (of the country) and the ‘primitive’ class (that is, the indigenous populations) (Fogal 1981: 1).

¹³ According to Podgorny (2007: 237), Lehmann-Nitsche is responsible for collecting the ‘oldest sound ethnographic and folkloric documents recorded in Argentina on Edison cylinders between 1905 and 1909’.

One way that Argentine folk music reflects indigenous characteristics is by referencing national Argentine icons such as the *gaucho* (cowboy) of the Argentine plains (*pampas*), the songs of the folk singers (*payadores*), individuals who ‘preserved their gaucho stories in song form’ (Swanson 2002: 1), and drawing on European stylistic dance forms such as the Polka and Mazurka.¹⁴ According to musicologist Deborah Schwartz-Kates (2002: 250), literary writers utilised the figure of the gaucho to embody ‘Argentine uniqueness and signified separation from Spain’ (Schwartz-Kates 2002: 253).¹⁵ Indeed, Hernandez encouraged the establishment of an Argentine identity by utilising the *gaucho* figure in his writings.¹⁶ Moreover, and by adapting Argentine *criollo* poems and stories to dance and music (Chamosa 2010: 23), Argentine composers contributed to the establishment of an Argentine identity. Consequently, *criollismo* came to embody romantic notions such as the ideal Argentine male character epitomised in the *gaucho* figure who roamed ‘free and light over the open plains, carrying nothing but a guitar, a fighting knife, and a saddle skirt’ (Chamosa 2010: 23).

By dramatising and idealising the *gaucho*, *criollismo* portrayed the figure as the hero of the Argentine *pampas*. Similarly, and from 1890-1930, the first generation of Argentine composers began to incorporate the influence of the *gaucho* into their music. Generally situated within the German romantic tradition, this influence is reflected in the works of most Argentine composers, including Julian Aguirre (1868-1924) and Alberto Williams (1862-1952) who also appropriated and incorporated the rhythms of *gaucho* dances, such as the

¹⁴ The popularity of *gaucho* or *criollo* literature peaked between 1870-1885 with the publication of the poem *Martin Fierro* (published in two parts in 1872 and 1879) by José Hernandez, a significant work in Argentine national literature.

¹⁵ After gaining independence from Spain in 1810, Argentina suffered an ‘identity crisis’ that caused intellectuals to respond with a national ‘soul searching’ in order to identify characteristics that define Argentina (Schuhl 2000: 1).

¹⁶ *Criollismo* rested on a romantic rendering of the past drawn from German romantic nationalism. *Criollismo* initially established the idea that Argentine nationality was rooted in rural culture (Chamosa 2010: 25).

chacarera and *gato* (Schwartz-Kates 2002: 253), into their works¹⁷. In an attempt to develop an Argentine musical style or *argentinidad*, the above composers also embraced the *gaucho* image and the characteristics associated with this figure. Such characteristics include strong male dominated macho-ness; rhythmic dances associated with the *gaucho*; and, other activities, behaviours, such as fighting for their lands vis-à-vis roaming the peaceful plains of the Argentine countryside (Schwartz-Kates 2002: 253). These kinds of activities are represented in the music by alternating complex rhythmic passages that depict the men fighting for their land, or competing with each other in men-only dances, with peaceful folk melodies depicting the *gauchos* roaming the wide, open plains (see the excerpt of music from Ginastera's Piano Sonata No. 1, first movement of the peaceful folk melody). Consequently, the *gaucho* image and dances are significant concerning the development of twentieth-century Argentine piano music.



¹⁷ Julian Aguirre's *Huella* for piano, which premiered in 1917, is Aguirre's most celebrated composition as it is an example of Argentine nationalism. The word *huella* means 'footprint' or 'trace' and refers to an archetypical *gaucho* genre (see Schwartz-Kates 2002: 256). Alberto Williams' *El Rancho Abandonado* (1890) expresses the nostalgia for the *gauchos* by providing a musical depiction of a typical scene in the Argentine countryside. Williams also composed the Piano Sonata, Op. 74, designated by the composer as the 'First Argentinean Sonata' that includes a range of national Argentine styles including the *malambo* (folk dance) (Bellman, 2000: 211).

(Ginastera 1954)

According to Schwartz-Kates (2002: 254), there are three reasons why Argentine composers at this time were attracted to the figure of the *gaucho*. First, the image of the *gaucho* as an icon of Argentine nationalism appealed to the elite social class to which composers belonged or wished to join.¹⁸ Second, the *gaucho* provided a rich referential network of imagery upon which composers could draw, such as the countryside, dance, dress codes, and so forth. Finally, and by appropriating indigenous musical characteristics, such as the rhythms of the *chacarera* or *malambo*, composers worked within an acceptable European framework, which, in turn, enabled them to legitimise Argentine folklore influences in the context of Western art music. As a result, Argentine composers ‘metaphorically tamed the wild gaucho spirit’ by applying a romanticised national figure within a musical framework (Schwartz-Kates 2002: 255). In doing so, composers ‘reconciled the conflict between civilization and barbarism that had pervaded Argentine discourse since Sarmiento’s early literary formulation that served to divide these polarities. Sarmiento sought to establish an upper class Argentina, and considered the indigenous and rural communities to be “barbaric”’ (Schartz-Kates 2002: 255). However, when composers associated with the upper classes began to apply indigenous, rural musical characteristics in their works, the division between the urban city and the countryside eventually dissipated. Consequently, Argentine composers played a vital role in bridging the divide between the urban and rural influences. Such an approach by the composers also contributed to the growth of an urban, upper class, cosmopolitan Argentina (Schwartz-Kates 2002: 255). Furthermore, and by utilising the *gaucho* image in their music, Argentine composers not only contributed to the development of an Argentine musical style, but also to the development of nationalism and folklore in

¹⁸ The Argentine classical music scene was dominated by the upper classes. If one were a part of the upper classes as a composer, one’s works would be received favourably.

Argentina. Having briefly examined the history and development of the folklore and nationalist movements in Argentina and their impact on Argentine art music, the following section describes the characteristics of the Argentine folklore dances. Such dances are geographically and socially constructed in the Argentine countryside and reflect characteristics of *criollismo* culture. An examination of these folk dances will provide insight into how these characteristics are applied to the piano music of Argentine composers.

Argentine Folklore Dances

Practised primarily in rural contexts, Argentine folk dances embody characteristics associated with specific geographic areas, particularly the image of the *gaucho*. Native to Argentina, the *malambo* is a lively dance with complex tap-dancing steps called *zapateos*. Only men perform this dance, in which the performers demonstrate considerable footwork skills by striking the floor in competition with each other. In the *pampas* region of Argentina, dancers attach metal stubs to their boots, striking the floor with these in-between tapping their feet. These strikes exhibit prowess, agility and speed, occurring within compound duple time metre of the performance. Originally conceived as a competition between two men, the dance can be presented solo or in a group performance, with practitioners wearing traditional gaucho clothes comprising loose trousers. In his Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 22, Alberto Ginastera utilised the characteristics of the *malambo*, exhibiting complex rhythmic patterns to emulate the men striking their feet on the ground.

Another popular creole¹⁹ dance, the *chacarera*, is also considered native to Argentina. According to Carlson (2011: 6-7), the *chacarera* originates from the ‘centre’ of the country and is ‘often associated with the rural desert geography and peasant culture of the northern province of Santiago del Estero’. It is lively, playfully mischievous dance with a light step

¹⁹ In Argentina, the term ‘creole’ or *criollismo* refers to those who are mixed blood, that is, of European and native Argentine descent.

and quick rhythm. This characteristic is achieved by a hemiola polyrhythm that occurs between the melody and accompaniment, and a binary form that comprises two phrases of six to eight measures. Although it is a couple dance, men and women do not embrace in performance. Instead, the male dancer attempts to win over the female dancer's attention by displaying complex footwork (*zapateo*). The *chacarera* comprises four stanzas with sung verses called *coplas*, a song form that originates from Spain. The musical ensemble that accompanies this dance typically includes a violin, guitar and *bombo* drum.²⁰ In his Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 22, Alberto Ginastera also references the rhythm of the *gauchos* dancing the *chacarera*. The composer does this by contrasting the complex rhythm and competition between men in the dance of the *malambo* with the playful and light steps that are particular to the *chacarera* dance.

Danced in rural Argentina, the *gato* has a light step and quick rhythm. Considered to be the 'archetype' of Argentine folk dances, the *gato* includes 'nearly all the traits or quantities found in all the other dance forms while still allowing the possibility for local or regional variations (Fogal: 1981: 210). As late as 1860, the *gato* was 'danced in the aristocratic salons of provincial capitols', revealing its upper class status, to guitar, violin, accordion, and the *bombo* accompaniment (Fogal 1981: 211). The dance adopts a 7-5-7-5 meter, which in turn creates an interesting rhythmic structure that further enables the display of showmanship associated with the *gaucho*. For instance, and throughout the performance, the male dancer pursues his female counterpart, attempting to impress her with his complex tap dancing steps (*zapateos*) and jumps. Indeed, the man's pursuit of the woman is compared to that of 'a cat going after its prey'.²¹ Thus, the *gato* exemplifies the strong personality of the *gaucho* and the grace of the Argentine woman. Because the dance depicts the image of the *gaucho*,

²⁰ The *bombo* drum is an important part of Argentine folklore (the *zamba*, *chacarera*). It is made of hollowed tree trunk and usually covered with sheep's skin. It originates from European military drums.

²¹ 'Introduction to Argentina's Folk Dances', Google pdf, accessed 11/6/13
http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/argentina11/scotto/scotto_2.pdf

nationalist composers, such as Julian Aguirre (1868-1924) and his student Lopez Buchardo (1881-1948), often wrote in the style of the *gato*. For example, Buchardo's piano piece *Bailecito* (Little Dance) stylises the rhythmic character of the *gato* and establishes the composers' relationship with Argentine musical tradition (Schwartz-Kates 2002: 261).

Similar to the *gato*, another dance associated with the *gaucho* is the *huella*. An expressive form that rose to prominence during the early years of Argentine nationhood, the *huella* depicts events from literary texts that 'recount events and facts of the armed conflicts during the rule of Juan Manuel Rosas' (Fogal 1981: 226). Depicting the wars and fighting for land between *gauchos*, the dance evokes through strong rhythmic characteristics links to the land and early development of the Argentine nation. Each of the aforementioned dances influenced many Argentine composers, including Alberto Ginastera, Floro Ugarte, Alberto Williams and Astor Piazzolla, who drew on the above forms in their quest to develop an Argentine musical identity, a process that involved integrating indigenous dances and Western art music or 'Argentinian art music'. Such a process highlights the role Argentinian art music and dance had in Argentina.

With the colonial settlement of Spanish immigrants in Argentina, as well as immigrants arriving from Italy and other European countries, Argentinian art music and European dance forms flourished. Such music and dance forms were also central to social and popular religious festivals acquired from Spain (Fogal 1981: 39). For example, serenades and other various dances, including the polka and Andalusian tango, were popular among Spanish immigrants to Argentina. In particular, and between 1850-80, three dance forms became very popular, these include the Cuban *habanera*,²² the Andalusian tango²³ and the *milonga*.²⁴ Of

²² The Cuban *habanera* spread throughout South America via touring entertainment companies, such as the Zarzuela, a musical theatre company from Havana and Spain. During this period, circa 1860, 'zarzuela troupes began to arrive from Spain and perform shows depicting regional life and music from the Iberian peninsula' (Fogal 1981: 308). Such troupes encouraged dancing at popular social events, performing a variety of tangos including tango Americano (also called *habanera*), tango Andaluz, tango flamenco, and tango Cubano. During

the three aforementioned dance forms, and given that it embodies characteristics of the musical culture of the *gaucho* and the *compadrito* of Buenos Aires, only the *milonga* is indigenous to Argentina. An early form of the Argentine tango, the *milonga* represents the merging of rural and urban Argentine music and dance influences. Moreover, the development of the *milonga* is a direct result of the transforming economic situation in Argentina. For instance, as Argentina became more cosmopolitan and less agricultural, the *gaucho* figure gradually disappeared from folkloric and nationalist discourse. As a result, the appearance of the street-corner man (*compadrito*²⁵) in the urban cities became popular.

As individuals associated with the urban lower class, the *compadritos*, represent the merging of European and Argentine cultural influences, civilization and barbarism, the country and city. The rhythmic and musical style of the *milonga* thus came to reflect the merging of these polarities; a hybrid of primitive *gaucho* elements and European musical style. Indeed, the *milonga* and tango share an underlying rhythmic structure of varied dotted rhythms that simultaneously reflects European musical structure and African rhythms. Some dances that came to Argentina also reflect their European heritage, including the polka, the Polish *mazurka*, and the German *Schottische*. Nevertheless, although Argentines accepted the polka as their own ‘folklore’ dance, the tango was considered an urban dance and therefore not associated with regional folklore dances. In light of this, the tango is distinct from the folk dances and forms an important part of popular music culture.

the next two decades the music of the zarzuelas became increasingly popular resulting in dances becoming a central part of social and religious activities.

²³ According to Fogal (1981: 126), the Andalusian tango is a song type brought to Argentina either by Spanish immigrants from the Andalusian region or zarzuela companies from Spain. The Andalusian region in the Southern part of Spain is also where the Flamenco (the national dance of Spain) comes from. The Andalusian tango is not to be confused with the Argentine tango that developed later in the early twentieth century.

²⁴ The *milonga* refers to a folksong with lyrics and shows off the improvisatory and virtuous abilities of the singer. *Milongas* were very popular in the city with folk singers some of the biggest stars of Buenos Aires. Eventually, the *milonga* came to mean the place one goes to in order to listen to folk music and to dance, referring to a dance hall (Denniston 2007: 197).

²⁵ *Compadritos* were *gauchos* who migrated to the urban centres, for example, Buenos Aires as a result of industrialization overtaking the Argentine countryside.

Despite the discussion above, the origins of tango are highly debateable.²⁶ Considered to be a ‘folkloric’ dance associated with the lower classes, because it was originally performed in the slums and brothels of Buenos Aires (Swanson 2002: 1; Fogal 1981: 127), the tango then developed into a refined, popular dance style, embraced by the upper classes in the twentieth century. Today, outside of Latin America, the tango is renowned for its commercialised and erotic presentation (Fogal 1981: 307-308). In Argentina, however, the tango is performed in social halls and classes in urban centres, particularly in Buenos Aires.²⁷ Thus, the tango is set apart in significant ways to other Argentine folk dances.

Each of the dances mentioned above exhibit strong links to the land of Argentina, a characteristic that influences the Argentinian piano composers to incorporate the rhythms of the *gauchos* and imagery associated to the land into their works. Such an approach utilises *criollismo* culture in order to create an Argentinian piano music and also serves to bridge the divide between the indigenous with the upper classes in Argentina. In order to understand how the Argentine composers adapted the folk dances and *criollo* characteristics into their music, I will now highlight in particular the work of Alberto Ginastera and Astor Piazzolla, two of the most important composers in Argentina’s history.

Argentine Composers – Alberto Ginastera and Astor Piazzolla

In drawing inspiration from the *gauchesco* tradition, the composer Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983) developed a unique Argentine musical style. He did this by utilising the legend of the *gauchos* of the *pampas* and the songs of the folk singers (*payadores*). Indeed, the influence of folk music elements is prevalent in Ginastera’s early piano music. In light of this, Schwartz-Kates (2010: 249) states that in order to understand Ginastera’s music one must look ‘within

²⁶ Some scholars argue that the roots of tango lie in *candomble*, a dance form performed by black African slaves in the Rio de la Plata region of Argentina in the early 1800s (Collier et al 1995).

²⁷ This contrasts with other folklore dances, such as *chacarera*, *gato*, *huella*, *zamba*, *malambo* and *cueca*, which continue to be practised in the rural regions of Argentina.

the context of the national construction of the gaucho' from which the composer drew inspiration and meaning. In Ginastera's early works, for example, folk music influences are quite obvious (such as in the Three Argentinian Dances, Op. 2 for piano), although in his later compositions such elements are more hidden and abstract. Modelled on the works of Lopez Buchardo, who contributed much to the miniature piano piece and the art song (Schwartz-Kates 2010: 269), many of Ginastera's early works utilise the distinctive rhythm of the *gato* – an Argentine folk dance stylised by Lopez Buchardo in his works such as *Bailecito*.

As a composer, Ginastera organised his works into three compositional 'periods'. The first, objective nationalism (1937-47), is a period in which the composer identifies with the Argentine landscape, the *gaucho*, and Argentine folk dance characteristics. One of Ginastera's early works, the ballet *Estancia* (1941), depicts the changing scenes of day on an Argentine *estancia* (ranch). It draws upon the *gauchesco* tradition and the 'interpolated sung and spoken passages from the gauchesco epic Martin Fierro' (Schwartz-Kates 2010: 5). Beginning around 1944, Ginastera began to transition into his second style period, subjective nationalism (1947-57), and a period in which he developed more advanced composition techniques. During this time, Ginastera applied techniques such as dodecaphony,²⁸ neoclassicism and jazz. This development places the works of this period in the style of the composers from the Grupo Renovacion, which includes Juan Jose Castro, Jose Maria Castro, Jacobo ficher, Luis Gianneo, Gilardo Gilardi, Juan Carlos Paz, and Honorio Siccardi (Schartz-Kates 2010: 1). By applying international techniques such as dodecaphony, neoclassicism and jazz, the aforementioned composers sought to revitalise Argentine music (Schwartz-Kates 2010: 1). At the time, Ginastera shared a close connection with members of the group and a common dilemma: how to integrate modernist techniques and also preserve a

²⁸ Dodecaphony is also known as the twelve-tone technique or twelve-tone serialism devised by the Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) in 1921.

unique Argentine identity. Ginastera accomplished this in his Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 22, a work that references Argentine folk dances, such as the *malambo* (see excerpt A), but which also utilises polytonal and twelve-tone techniques (see excerpt B). Another musical characteristic depicted in this sonata and more broadly in Ginastera’s second period is that of ‘pastoral’, a reference to the *gauchesco* tradition (see excerpt C).²⁹

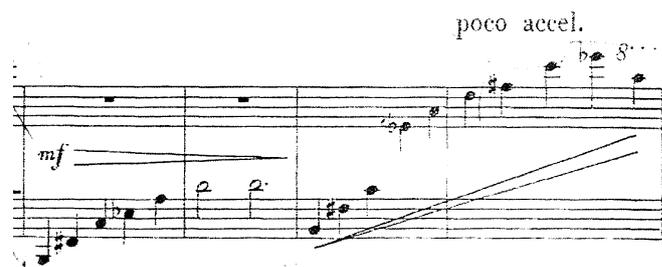
A. Ruvido ed ostinato



B. Presto misterioso



C.



(Ginastera 1954)

In the composer’s third period, neo-expressionism (1958-83), and under the increasing influence of European avant-garde aesthetics, Argentine folk elements become increasingly abstract in Ginastera’s music (such as in excerpt B above). According to Ginastera, in such

²⁹ The extensive use of fourths and fifths in this period possibly references neoclassicism and the presence of Aaron Copland in Latin America, whose use of such intervals signify ‘wide open spaces’ (Schwartz-Kates 2010: 272).

works ‘there are no more folk melodic or rhythmic cells, nor is there any symbolism. There are, however, constant Argentine elements, such as strong, obsessive rhythms, meditative adagios suggesting the quietness of the Pampas; magic, mysterious sounds reminding the cryptic nature of the country’.³⁰ The Piano Concerto Nos. 1 and 2 belong to this later period, with such works also exhibiting contemporary compositional techniques.

Similar to Ginastera, Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) composed not only in the Argentinian art tradition but he also appropriated various elements from classical, jazz, folklore and tango in order to create a new musical style: new tango (*nuevo tango*). In formulating this original musical genre, Piazzolla drew from the expertise of Ginastera, his piano teacher; Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979), with whom he studied composition in Paris;³¹ jazz musicians, such as Gerry Mulligan (1927-1996) and Gary Burton (b. 1943); and, the influence of tango.

By drawing on such influences, Piazzolla transformed tango music from a vernacular form performed on the social dance floor into a high art form presented in the concert hall (Maurino 2005: 1). Such a development resulted in tango music reaching audiences beyond the tango dance floor. Consequently, *nuevo tango* became an international phenomenon and Piazzolla’s role in developing tango music considered as significant as that of Bartok and Stravinsky, both of whom incorporated folk music elements into their classical works (Cannata 2005: 57). Piazzolla also greatly admired the aforementioned composers, the latter of whom significantly influenced not only Piazzolla but also generations of Argentine composers in the twentieth century³². In addition, the influences of US composers, such as

³⁰Allianello, Monica. Google article accessed on 20/6/2013 at <http://pianosociety.com/cms/index.php?section=1223>

³¹ Nadia Boulanger encouraged Piazzolla to compose using tango musical characteristics, and as a result Piazzolla focused on creating a high art ‘tango’ music and subsequently transformed the genre.

³² Stravinsky revolutionised the musical world in Europe and in US as he was an inventor of new forms, new rhythms, new techniques, and a new aesthetic.

Aaron Copland (1900-1990),³³ who worked in both the Western art and jazz idioms, also inspired Piazzolla to create a new and revolutionary ‘Argentinian’ sound. It is for this reason that Ginelli (2004: 1) describes Piazzolla’s contribution to twentieth-century Argentine classical music as equal to that of Duke Ellington (1899-1974), an American composer, pianist and big-band leader, who is considered by many to be one of the leading figures in jazz music history and other music genres. Similarly, Footer (2003: 19) acknowledges that Piazzolla, as ‘one of the world’s most prolific composers (along with Mozart)’, also happened to be a virtuoso *bandoneon*³⁴ player. Despite most of his works being composed for *bandoneon* and orchestra or the various bands he led such as the Buenos Aires Octet, Piazzolla did compose select works for piano solo, including his tango *Invierno Porteno* (1970) and *Balada para un Loco* (Ballad for a Madman) (1969) and three preludes composed in New York in 1987, entitled *Leijia’s Game*, *Flora’s Game* and *Sunny’s Game*.³⁵ Piazzolla’s music is thus influenced by not only national Argentine music such as the tango, but also by Western art and jazz music genres, creating a new genre in *nuevo tango*.

Conclusion

In summary, the shaping of Argentina’s folklore heritage and nationalist ideologies have influenced Argentine composers to compose music that represents these ideologies. The folk dances of Argentina provide a rich musical heritage from which composers could draw, such as utilising musical characteristics of rhythm and harmony that symbolise and evoke images of the Argentine geographical countryside and iconic figures, including the *gaucho*. Thus, the convergence of nationalist ideologies expressed by Argentina’s literary writers and Argentine

³³ Aaron Copland met Piazzolla during one of his tours of South America. At this time, Piazzolla was active in Buenos Aires with his band that Copland heard live (Bachman 1991: 4).

³⁴ Invented in the 1840s by the German, Heinrich Band, after whom the instrument is named, the Bandoneon is similar to an accordion.

³⁵ Many of Piazzolla’s works are arranged for the piano or smaller chamber combinations, including piano trio, flute and piano, and so forth.

folk dances profoundly impacts the piano music of Argentina. The influence of literary writers, political system and folk musicians and dancers pervade twentieth-century Argentine piano music and are therefore inherently connected to Argentine music identity. Similar to the literary writers, composers also sought to establish ‘Argentine’ characteristics by drawing upon the *gauchesco* legacy and the polarities of rural and urban Argentina (for example, the rural folklore dances and tango, the urban dance). Thus, Argentine folklore music and dance has a profound impact on the development of twentieth-century Argentine piano music. In order to understand how the performer interprets the Argentine piano music, chapter two details my experiences as a pianist performer learning this music.

Chapter Two:

Performance Practice and Learning Argentine Piano Music in New York

As the previous chapter has shown, the Argentine music of the mid twentieth century is rich in cultural symbolism. In order to prepare myself, a young Western Australian with no experience of the Argentine traditions, I decided to learn Argentine piano music with the acclaimed concert pianist Rosa Antonelli in New York, US. A leading exponent of Latin American and Spanish music,³⁶ Antonelli has premiered works by important Latin American composers, including Astor Piazzolla, Floro Ugarte and Alberto Ginastera.³⁷ In order to understand how my studies with Antonelli impacted my interpretation of twentieth-century Argentine piano music, in this chapter I draw upon approaches from performance practice and performance ethnography.

Utilising Goffman's (1959) research pertaining to performance in everyday life, I examine how everyday activities – such as making a cup of tea or sitting down to read a book – relate to and complement my piano playing. Understanding the relationship between everyday life and piano performance is important because studying with Antonelli enabled me to understand the ways in which everyday physical actions create unnecessary tensions in my body. As a result, the tensions reduced my ability to practise for long periods of time in

³⁶ Critical reviews of Antonelli's performances are in *Fanfare* magazine, *The American Record Guide*, and by Harris Goldsmith in the *New York Concert Review*.

³⁷ Antonelli earned her Masters Degree of Superior Professor of Music with Honours from the National Conservatory *Carlos Lopez Buchardo* in Buenos Aires. As a professor of music, Antonelli was chairwoman of the piano department at the Provincial Conservatory of Music *Alberto Ginastera* for ten years. In 1999 she moved to the United States where she joined faculty of piano at Adelphi University. In 1998, she was invited to become a Steinway Artist and in 2006 was granted an American citizenship because of her status as 'An Artist of Extraordinary Ability'. She has made extensive tours performing in Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin and North America. She has been sponsored by government organizations such as The Office of President, The Ministry of Culture, and The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Italy, Germany, Egypt, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Brazil and other Latin American countries. She has also been sponsored by cultural organizations including the Chopin Society (Warsaw, Poland), the Jose Marti Cultural Centre (Amsterdam, Netherlands), International Artistic Center Athenaeum (Athens, Greece), Collegium Musicum di Latina (Rome, Italy) and many others. She has performed in halls around the world including Milan's Palazzo Visconti, Grenoble Auditorium in Naples, Atrium Theatre in Prague, Bosendorfer Hall in Vienna, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York city are among some. She has studied with Professor Alfonso Montecino, a disciple of Claudio Arrau. She has studied piano with Roberto Caamano, Rosalyn Tureck, Rafael Puyanas, Manuel Carra, and other notable professors.

preparation for my Masters' recital. In order to explore how I overcame such difficulties, the chapter outlines how I became aware of the everyday activities that impinged on my performance and, how, as a result of such realisations, I implemented activities that benefitted my piano playing and performance. Following, and to understand the difficulties that I encountered during the creative process of learning and performing twentieth-century Argentine piano music, I draw on Denzin's (2003) work concerning performance ethnography. Such an approach enables one to better comprehend issues that affected my development as a performer. In order to comprehend such issues, I draw on Pasler's (2008) concept of 'question spaces'. According to Pasler (2008: viii), this concept 'permits a fluidity of interaction... [and] opens up complex networks that evince the interdependence among musical, political, social, and cultural structures'. For example, 'question spaces' can challenge us to rethink assumptions about music, such as how it is perceived and understood by the performer and the audience.

Examining a series of 'question spaces' in relation to my practice then enables me as a musician and performance ethnographer to explore a range of issues in and around music that affect my ability to play the piano and to uncover 'multiple layers of awareness' (Pasler 2008: 1). Similarly, I use the concept of 'question spaces' to explore the nexus between folk dance rhythms and twentieth-century Argentine piano music. By conceptualising such issues as 'question spaces', Pasler (2008: viii) states that musicians are better able to approach music as an 'intellectual inquiry and human experience'. In order to explore how such a process enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of Argentine twentieth-century piano music, I highlight how, as a result of my studies with Antonelli in New York, I was more fully able to grasp the ways in which composers such as Ugarte, Ginastera, and Piazzolla integrate the rhythms of various Argentine dances into their piano music. In order to provide a theoretical context for the chapter, however, it is necessary to outline the work of Erving

Goffman (1959), one of the most influential scholars of the twentieth century who presented new ideas about performance and how this impacts on contemporary performance-based music research. Such ideas challenged preconceived notions in sociology and paved the way for the emergence of performance studies.

Goffman and ‘Performance in Everyday Life’

Goffman’s (1959) work³⁸ pertaining to ‘performance in everyday life’ emerged as a result of his interest in social interactions and relates to the various artistic and literary movements that preceded his research, including Dadaism, Futurism and Russian revolutionary art movements.³⁹ Such movements paved the way for ethnography⁴⁰ to emerge as a research tool to study people and experiences.⁴¹ Initially, ethnography encompassed the study of people and groups other than one’s own. Following, ethnography developed from a research technique to also encompass a style of writing about personal accounts and experiences,

³⁸ Erving Goffman, a Canadian sociologist, was one of the first to explore performance in everyday life (see Goffman 1959, 1967, 1974).

³⁹ Such movements used ‘live’ art for the artists to communicate personal convictions concerning political and social issues, such as human rights, moral and religious beliefs. Consequently, ‘live’ art movements enabled artists to devise new ways in which to represent social life and political convictions. Many such ‘live’ art movements, including Dadaism, Futurism and Productivism, also incorporated a broad perspective of avant-garde theatre, dance, music and cabaret (Denzin 2003: 199-200; see also Roth 1997). Such movements therefore utilised a range of arts to communicate various messages. Thus, and by rejecting traditional Western high art and embracing ‘live’ art or ‘anti’ art, artists aimed to create crude, loud art the purpose of which as to shock its recipients. Consequently, ‘live’ art impacted on the way people perceived social and political life.

⁴⁰ This form of inquiry has its roots in two streams: British social anthropology (Malinowski 1944, Radcliffe-Brown 1931, Pritchard 1962) and the Chicago School of Sociology in the US in the 1920s and 1930s (Park 1940, Goffman 1959). The former discipline emerged as a result of the British Empire seeking to understand the impact of colonial rule on various cultures (Brewer 2000: 11). The latter discipline developed in order to comprehend the urban city through ethnographic fieldwork of one’s own culture. In addition to the establishment of British social anthropology and sociology in US, the disciplines of folklore and cultural anthropology in the US also influenced the discipline of performance studies when it emerged in the early 1960s. Both cultural anthropology and folklore draw from the social sciences and are interested in people and groups.

⁴¹ Brewer (2000: 11) describes how ethnography is not one particular method but a research style the objective of which is to study the social meanings and activities of people groups. As a result, ethnography utilises a variety of methods to collect data. The purpose of the research methodology is to enable the researcher to participate directly in that which is being researched. Consequently, the method enables one to access meaning in the activities and social interactions. Thus, meaning is embodied into the experiences of the researcher who then provides a personal and systematic description and analysis.

including one's own culture (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Barz and Cooley 1997).⁴² Today, scholars apply ethnographic practices as a means to reflect on one's own development as a researcher (Barz and Cooley 2008). Such an approach enables performance studies researchers to reflect on their personal experiences in order to better understand how they progressively learn and develop as a scholar. In light of this, performance studies emerged by building upon ethnography. This is evident in the work of Erving Goffman (1959) who presented new ideas about performance.

By drawing on ethnography and the aforementioned literary and artistic movements, Goffman (1959) sought to offer new possibilities for approaching the study of performance. By exploring new ideas for performance as social interaction, social organisation and the social construction of the self, Goffman's approach to the study of everyday life encourages scholars to explore new ideas and approaches to performance. As a result of examining everyday activities as performance, for example, Goffman contends that everyday life is 'framed and performed' (Schechner and Appel 1995: 25). Consequently, Goffman considers everyday life and social interactions to be performances that can then be examined and analysed.

In order to examine everyday life and social interactions, Goffman draws upon the Shakespearean metaphor that 'all the world's a stage' (Schechner 2002: 132). Such an approach reveals how performance includes a broad range of activities, encompassing both the everyday and a consciously performed event.⁴³ However, Goffman's (1959) research also

⁴² Such a development occurred as a result of the so-called 'crisis of representation' in social scientific research during the 1980s in which scholars drew attention to the absence of the researcher's presence in published works. Consequently, scholars gradually started to write themselves 'into' ethnography.

⁴³ This approach was different to ideas that the time did not include the everyday as a 'performance' to be analysed. Such existing ideas perceived performance as that which was an actual staged performance event. The artists involved in such movements sought to bring about this change with political, performative, feminist, revolutionary or activist positions (Denzin 2003: 200). Consequently, artistic movements such as Dadaism and Futurism were revolutionary in the way they communicated the political and social views of everyday people to the public. In light of this, 'live' art is interested in that which is currently unfolding or 'performed' in a particular social context. This finding is important to performance studies because 'live' art movements were the first to explore art and social life in this manner.

sought to develop an awareness of how activities ‘performed’ in the everyday and in a consciously performed event, such as a piano recital, for example, connect to each other. Thus, and by dissolving the distinction between everyday activities and a consciously performed event, such an approach seeks to comprehend the various levels of understanding and awareness of performance activities.

By adopting Goffman’s approach, the performance ethnographer may interweave his or her professionally performed actions, for example, playing a musical instrument on stage, with everyday life interactions (Denzin 2003). In doing so, the performance ethnographer seeks to understand how everyday and consciously performed actions relate to and influence each other. In order to better understand how such ‘performance’ activities impact upon each other, however, the performance ethnographer must reflect on the various activities in which she engages. When applied to music performance research, Goffman’s research provides a framework through which to examine oneself as a music performer within the context of everyday life. Consequently, the music performance ethnographer is then able to explore how everyday and consciously performed events affect each other.

Denzin and the Performance Ethnographer

Like Goffman, Denzin (2003: 188) explored the multiple ways in which performance may be understood: as struggle, imitation, intervention, kinesis or an invention. By privileging the concept of ‘struggle’, Denzin seeks to understand the processes through which participants overcome difficulties encountered in performance situations. In light of this, Denzin contends that the performance ethnographer may explore the various facets of performance, for example, developing awareness of a ‘struggle’, identifying the cause, and implementing strategies that may specifically address the ‘struggle’ physically or mentally (Denzin 2003: 195). Consequently, Denzin (2003) notes how the performance ethnographer may use

ethnographic methods as a tool to reflect upon and better comprehend the ways in which one develops as a performer.⁴⁴ Denzin's (2003) concept of the 'performance ethnographer', that is, a researcher who values personal experience, reflection and understanding as forms of learning, can be extended by understanding and applying Schechner's (2005) concept of 'restored behaviour' and how this notion enables the performance ethnographer to explore and develop one's ideas about performance.

Schechner (2002) utilises the term 'restored behaviour' to describe certain practices and behaviours that constitute 'being' or 'doing' as a performance. With reference to his research on performance studies, Schechner (2005) argues that anything that constitutes a state of 'being' or 'doing' is a performance and can be repeated.⁴⁵ In light of this, actions that are 'performed' in the everyday are also repeated. For example, a musical performance is part of 'everyday' life because it is repeatedly practised or 'performed'. Similarly, the practices in which a musician engages immediately prior to such a performance are also considered to be part of the 'everyday'. In order to better conceptualise the repetitive nature of such actions, Schechner's concept of 'restored behaviour' provides a framework through which practitioners and researchers may reflect on and analyse music performance as part of everyday life.⁴⁶ Such an understanding implies that restored behaviour is reflexive and that 'physical or verbal actions that are not-for-the-first time, prepared, or rehearsed' (Schechner 2002: 22) refer back to previous behaviour. Consequently, restored behaviour requires an

⁴⁴ According to Denzin (2003: 195), the performance ethnographer 'values intimacy and involvement as forms of understanding'. Such a stance, therefore, enables the 'self to be vulnerable to its own experiences as well as to the experiences of the other' (Denzin 2003: 195). Vulnerability to such experiences then allows the subject (that is, the performance ethnographer who is simultaneously the researcher and the subject of the research) to gain new insights into oneself as a performance ethnographer. By adopting such an approach, the performance ethnographer not only strives to explore the experiences associated with each part of the learning process but she is also better placed to more fully understand such experiences and how they relate to everyday and intentionally performed actions.

⁴⁵ For instance, repeated social interactions and practices include activities such as playing a musical instrument, participating in a theatrical presentation and everyday social interactions.

⁴⁶ Carlson (2004: ix, 12) notes that Schechner (2002) utilises the term 'restored behaviour' to describe not only the 'doing' but also the 're-doing' or 're-performing' of certain practices and behaviours. Therefore, the concept of 'restored behaviour' provides a useful lens through which to analyse musical performance and the 're-performing' of actions.

individual to be reflexive about what one is doing or re-doing in a given context (Carlson 2004: ix; Bauman 2004: 7).

When one engages in restored behaviour – consider practising a musical work everyday over a period of several months – one becomes aware that one is ‘re-performing’ certain actions. The degree to which one is aware of what is being ‘re-performed’ on each occasion, however, determines one’s level of reflexivity and aptitude for creative development. For example, practising a musical instrument requires conscious effort on the part of the player in order to ‘re-perform’ and embody the mental and muscular actions required to develop one’s skill. In contrast, one tends to engage in ‘re-performing’ everyday social interactions with less self-awareness. Such an understanding of re-performing thus enables one to understand the actions one embodies as a result of playing a musical instrument. Such a process of understanding is also vital to the way in which one develops as a music performer.

Providing further insight into the aforementioned process, Parncutt (2007) examines how music students can better engage in ‘restored behaviour’ (after Schechner 2002). Parncutt (2007: 7) notes that piano students know relatively little about ‘the physics, physiology and psychology of piano performance’. Such a statement reveals that a pianist may have little self-awareness during a performance, including the physical impact upon him or herself and on the piano. In such a situation, however, it is necessary for a musician to engage in ‘restored behaviour’ in order to develop self-awareness of one’s actions. As a result, the author suggests that one can apply ‘restored behaviour’ (after Schechner 2002) in order to develop self-awareness of one’s physical actions as a performer. For example, by becoming aware of a particular movement in which one engages whilst playing a difficult passage enables one to critical reflect on the effectiveness of the action. Thus, and by seeking to better understand how actions that relate to the physics, physiology and psychology of piano performance, Parncutt (2007) aims to equip musicians to better cope with the stress of

musical performance. By engaging in ‘restored behaviour’ (after Parncutt 2007), musicians are then better able to ‘re-perform’ the music in a more informed and effective manner. The process of ‘re-performing’ also facilitates ‘restored behaviour’ because it provides musicians with a practice strategy.⁴⁷ In order to articulate the process of reflecting upon one’s practice sessions, and by drawing on research from psychology, Parncutt (2007: 8) refers to this kind of musical practice as using the term metacognition, or ‘thinking about thinking’.⁴⁸ For example, once one plans one’s practice session and completes it, reflecting on the session utilises metacognition. By engaging in such a process, one reflects on the most effective music practice strategies.

Davidson (2007: 216) utilises an approach similar to Parncutt in order to engage actively in reflection as she coordinates theatrical rehearsals. According to Davidson (2007: 216), such a process involves, ‘experimentation, reflection, [and] re-formulation. It is a constant process in which I pose hypotheses or questions and test out what works when. Sometimes knowing why it works can be more challenging’. Such a process reveals that understanding why particular actions are utilised in certain circumstances is important for all performers in order for their performance to be most effective. Furthermore, engaging in metacognition is important for all performance studies research because it involves considering that which is live art or an activity which is unfolding. Consequently, applying reflective thinking in performance studies research provides individuals with deeper insights into the reasons behind one’s actions. Likewise, performance studies provides a framework with which to explore the process of metacognition so that one may share, from a subjective

⁴⁷ For example, the musician is able to consider aspects besides the musical material and how this affects one’s performance such as the physics, physiology and psychology of performance.

⁴⁸ For example, Dobson (2010) cites Parncutt (2007) in her study on performing the self with a focus on autonomy and self-expression in jazz musicians and classical string players. Dobson (2010: 52), who was supervised by Sloboda (1994) quotes Parncutt in regards to maintaining limited self-investment into your own performance or ‘emotional distance’ in order to obtain technical perfection. Parkes and Brett (2011) examine why musicians choose a career in music and identify four themes: enjoyment, ability, usefulness and identity. Parkes and Brett cite Parncutt (2007) in order to approach this project through a psychological lens.

point of view, one's own experiences with others. This is a significant concept which, when applied to music research highlights issues important to musical learning and the development of performance practice. In order to understand how performance practice is applied to my own experiences learning twentieth-century Argentine piano music, the following section details my personal reflections relating to my experiences of studying with Rose Antonelli in New York.

Personal Reflections on Learning twentieth-century Argentine Piano Music in New York

I first began learning twentieth-century Argentine piano music in Perth, Western Australia, in 2012. During this time, I applied preconceived ideas about musical interpretation based on my training in Western Classical music as I learned this repertoire. Soon, and due to the interpretive challenges that I encountered, I realised that I needed to change how I played this music.⁴⁹ I quickly realised that I could not apply traditional musical techniques and interpretations to this music because they did not work, and, at the same time, I was not sure how it was meant to be played. Indeed, the music required a new interpretation and approach that I had not previously encountered through the established traditions of performance practice. Prior to studying in New York, for example, I learned Ginastera's Piano Sonata No. 1. In doing so, I adopted a percussive, loud and strictly rhythmic approach to learning the music. The juxtaposition of time signatures and frequent changes of register, however, created complex musical passages that were difficult to master. In December 2012, I performed the first and last movements of Ginastera's Piano Sonata No. 1 in Perth and at the 35th Musicological Society of Australia Conference in Canberra. I received positive feedback

⁴⁹ Heaton's (2012) discussion vis-à-vis contemporary performance practice and tradition highlights these as two different approaches to Western music performance practice. Contemporary performance practice must be informed by an understanding of what the composer intended and not by applying traditional Western music ideas.

relating to both of these performances. However, I could not understand why after each performance I felt physically exhausted and I experienced significant pain in my forearm. Was it simply that because the music was difficult to play for any pianist, and that it should feel ‘difficult’ to play? Was there a way to overcome this?

Shortly after these performances, in January 2013, I travelled to New York, where I took piano lessons with Rosa Antonelli for five months.⁵⁰ In my first lesson, Antonelli asked me, ‘How do you feel physically when you play, Naomi?’ I did not expect this question, and simply answered that ‘I often feel tension and pain in my forearms and neck when playing Ginastera’s Piano Sonata, and after practising for about five hours in a day, I feel physically exhausted’. In reflecting on what caused these issues, I began to question my initial approach to learning the work in Perth. By exaggerating the accents and rhythmic accuracy of the music, my initial approach to this music was ‘full of aggressive jerkiness, both neurotic and unstable’ (Heaton 2012: 102).⁵¹

As a result of assuming that each marking in the music must be exaggerated, I found playing Ginastera’s Piano Sonata No. 1 to be a physically exhausting experience. Consequently, I started to question my physical approach to playing the piano. Thus, I developed a ‘question space’ (after Pasler 2008), and applied a performance ethnography approach that ‘values intimacy and involvement as forms of understanding’ (Denzin 2003: 195), and so I sought to solve this problem. During my study in New York, I also took the time to explore this question space while also new ways to play the Ginastera that first and foremost considered the physical aspect of playing the piano.

⁵⁰ The piano lessons with Antonelli consisted of once a week for one or two hours. These lessons took place in her private studio at West 57th Street, New York.

⁵¹ Heaton’s (2012: 102) study reveals that musicians often tend to assume that all markings in twentieth century music must be over-exaggerated and that rhythm is of primary importance (Heaton 2012: 102).

Question Space No. 1: ‘Physical Movement’

An awareness of how the impact of everyday activities affected my performance enabled my physical approach to playing the piano to develop. As a result of this process, I became aware of my behaviour and actions vis-à-vis playing the piano and progressively identified the ‘struggle’ (after Denzin 2003) that was taking place in my body as I played. For example, I realised that in learning a new piece of music prior to New York I would: first, learn the notes in tempo, that is, become familiar with the musical material to be able to play as close to the performance tempo as I could; second, develop musical interpretation, that is, understand how to phrase the musical material; and, finally, address any problems regarding how I physically moved while also memorizing the music.

As a result of adopting a performance ethnographer approach to my practice, I realised that my conventional process caused me to experience physical problems in this Argentine repertoire. I began to explore these physical facets of performance by questioning and examining every single movement I made, implementing strategies to address the physical and mental ‘struggles’ I experienced (Denzin 2003: 195). For example, since a performance ethnographer seeks to use performance and ethnography as mechanisms for change, the strategies I learned in New York enabled me to implement some changes as to how I approached learning a new piece of music and, ultimately, how confidently I would perform the music in my Masters’ recital. For instance, I realised that I needed to first consider my physical movement when playing at a very slow tempo, in order to find the most economical and efficient movements; second, to consider the musical interpretation; and, finally, to memorise the music. This progression, significantly different to my approach to learning in Perth, gradually enabled me to play without any pain or exhaustion. As a result of my studies with Antonelli (2013), I also explored new ways to approach the music that, in turn, enabled me to implement these changes to my previous approach to performance.

My discussions with Antonelli enabled me to identify new ways to approach twentieth-century Argentine piano repertoire. In her book on piano technique, Antonelli (2013: xi) defines her principle of ‘extreme economy’ as applying the most efficient movements possible to each note. Drawing on her extensive experience as a performing artist and researcher into the science of physics and movement, Antonelli (2013) notes that one must develop endurance and strength in the finer motor muscles and that this enables one to develop as a pianist.

By addressing the physical aspect of being a pianist, such as posture, position, kinetic energy, Antonelli (2013: xi) also seeks to help one to play the piano in the most efficient manner and find the most beautiful tone. By applying this approach to my practice, I have become more aware of my body as I play and I am more readily able to identify particular actions that impinge on my performance. For example, lowering one’s wrist below the keyboard often puts unnecessary strain on the forearm and contributes to fatigue in this muscle. However, if one is aware of every action that can cause this strain, then one can implement changes. According to Antonelli (2013: 6) ‘the pianist must have an exact notion of how he is using his body at all times when he is practicing... one must know precisely every movement one is making and why’. By examining every single movement one makes, and doing so in a methodical and slow tempo, engaging all of one’s awareness and musical sensitivities, can one understand what and why one moves in a particular manner.

As I began to apply Antonelli’s concept of extreme economy to my playing, I gradually addressed the physical ‘question space’ (Pasler 2008) that had arisen prior to my study trip to New York. This question space included several lines of enquiry that I had voiced to my piano tutor and occupational therapist in Perth, Western Australia: ‘Why did I experience pain in my forearm when playing intensely fast passages, and why did I find myself feeling tired after a few hours practising, and was this normal?’ In order to address this particular

question space, I applied Antonelli's concept of 'extreme economy' to my daily practice regime.

I was willing to learn a new physical approach, and this willingness to become aware of and address my own physical movements enabled me to identify three unhelpful habits of which I have been previously unaware. These habits included: first, keeping my elbows in near my body at all times – this restricted my freedom of movement and served to generate tension in my forearms; second, playing 'inwards' with the body slouching forward, the back arched and leaning in towards the piano rather than sitting upright – this created unnecessary strain on my spine, neck and shoulders and thus caused me to feel tired quickly; and, finally, collapsing my wrist and knuckles downwards when playing in an attempt to use the 'wrist' or arm weight magnified the problem⁵². I identified the above issues as a result of studying with Antonelli in New York. This experience encouraged me to develop as a performance ethnographer, by becoming more aware of my actions in performance.

According to the philosopher Socrates, it is important for one to 'know thyself' (Brennan 2013: 9), and as I gradually became aware of the ways in which my actions and movements hindered my performance, I was able to find new ways of moving that addressed the above issues. For example, by opening up my arm and elbow, and moving in large sweeping motions – such as the way in which an elephant moves its trunk – proved to have incredible benefits for my playing. No longer did I struggle to play technically difficult passages, especially those that move up and down the piano quickly with awkward leaps. I accomplished this by applying body movements taught to me by Antonelli (2013).⁵³

⁵² The fingers cannot support the arm weight when they collapse inwards.

⁵³ Such movements, which can be applied to the performance of piano music in general, include: rotational movements, lateral movements and vertical movements. Rotational movements consist of those that require the wrist to draw the shape of a circle whilst playing a phrase or passage; lateral movements are necessary, for example, when the music alternates between the fifth finger and the thumb and the wrist has to move from side to side to accommodate such a movement; vertical movements are required when the pianist coming from above onto a new note/chord. An example of applying lateral movements is in the first movement of Ugarte's *Suite de Mi Tierra*, in which the left hand plays semiquavers from the fifth finger to the thumb and second finger in a

As I began to apply Antonelli's approach to the music, I became aware of the impact they had on my playing. Indeed, and as I reflected on this process by applying metacognition (after Parncutt 2007), that is 'thinking about thinking' with regards to my practice, I particularly noticed how such an approach to performance affected the speed of my development vis-à-vis my playing prior to New York. By considering physical movements first when learning a new piece, I was able to progress and memorise the music faster and I also felt stronger as a piano player. As a result of applying Antonelli's concept of 'extreme economy', I found that playing has become easier – it flowed more naturally, and, as a result, I am more able to control my performance.

While studying in New York, and in order to develop my physical approach to the piano, I also sought assistance from Brooke N. Lieb, a qualified Alexander Technique instructor who worked with musicians and performing artists. In order to become more aware of my physical movement and posture that in turn directly impacted on my ability to play the piano (after Brennan 2013: 12), I applied Alexander Technique to my practice. Consequently, and as a result of participating in one-on-one sessions with Lieb, which consisted of two sessions per week over a period of five weeks,⁵⁴ I was able to identify and let go of many 'tensions' of which I was unaware of in my body. Such tensions stemmed from everyday activities as well as from playing the piano. For example, how I sit on a chair often created tensions of which I was unaware. The process of 're-education' or teaching my body to

repetitive pattern. Applying such movement to my practice enabled me to perform with economic but expressive gestures.

⁵⁴ Alexander Technique specialist N. Brooke Lieb has worked with musicians, actors and athletes. My training with her has enhanced and complemented the depth of understanding in body movement and enabled me to apply these concepts to playing the piano. Brooke trained at the American Centre for the Alexander Technique and graduated in 1989. She is a certified Trainer for the Alexander Technique. In 2006 she was appointed Associate Director of Teacher Training at the American Centre for the Alexander Technique. In private practice, Brooke's clients include singers, instrumentalists, dancers, actors and visual artists; educators; business professionals; people recovering from and interested in preventing injuries and chronic pain; and those people interested in a greater awareness of the intimate connection between body and mind. Brooke is also trained in Cranio-sacral Therapy through the Upledger Institute. The Alexander Technique is taught in prestigious music schools throughout the world including the Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music, Mannes College, Carnegie Melon University, NYU, the Royal Academy of Music and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, to name but a few.

identify my own problem areas of tension and to ‘help myself’ enabled me to be my own teacher (Brennan 2013: 15). In one practice session, I became aware of tightening the muscles in my jaw, tongue and neck. I was aware of my jaw tightening in the past, but I did not have any strategy to overcome this.

In order to ‘release’ tensions consciously, I had to focus on lengthening and expanding rather than contract the muscles. In doing so, I became aware of weaknesses in my body, such as relying more on my left side (probably due to being left handed). This meant that I was not fully utilising or developing the strength in my right hand and resulted in my over-compensating with the left hand. Once I identified this shortcoming, I was able to begin doing stretches and exercises in both hands, particularly focusing on building strength in my right hand. These stretches enabled my playing to become ‘stronger’. Consequently, I began to hear and feel changes in the music, such as hearing the melody project more from my right hand. In this way, applying the Alexander Technique to my practice enabled me to engage in ‘restored behaviour’ (after Schechner 2005), such as repetitive actions as simple as walking, sitting at the piano stool, moving my arms, hands and fingers.⁵⁵ Such small changes to my everyday actions enabled my body to relax, and in turn enabled me to become more aware of my body.

In order to develop everyday actions that benefit my piano playing not only did I commit to a daily regime of various stretches but I also executed a daily routine that involved lifting light weights. This process involved applying the mind-body connection in order to deal with issues such as a weaker right hand. According to Lieb (2006: 1), too often, we ‘feel’ our actions rather than ‘think’ them. Nevertheless, thinking the thoughts about how one will most effectively do something ‘is the tool that brings change about in you’ (Lieb 2006: 1).

⁵⁵ For example, something as simple as standing up from a sitting position on a chair can strain one’s neck. As a result of studying with Lieb, I learned to stand up using my skeletal structure, and not to pull up through my neck. This had the advantage of utilising my body as a connected ‘whole’ rather than relying on one muscle too much. I also learned when standing to hold my weight evenly on each foot and keep my knees relaxed.

The Alexander Technique has enabled me to utilise the three skills of awareness, inhibition, and direction which enabled me to break this bad habit. Applying the Alexander Technique to my practice regime has enabled me to improve my technical skill and efficiency without excess muscular effort,⁵⁶ and move in accordance with the design of my body reducing the risk of injury or pain, resulting in my feeling lighter and more at ease while performing and in everyday activities. This body awareness relates to Goffman's (1959) ideas that everyday actions and actual performance events relate to and affect each other, and serves to dissolve the distinction between these events.

Prior to studying in New York I had not considered the ways in which everyday activities impacted my piano practice. However, by addressing such issues I am now able to play the piano for longer periods of time without any tension. Indeed, it is now a natural part of my everyday to be aware of my body the minute I sit at the piano, and as a preventative measure, to execute neck, arm and finger stretches regularly throughout practice sessions. In light of this, I am more aware of how particular everyday actions impinge on and affect my piano playing. In particular, I noticed how applying the Alexander technique and Antonelli's (2013) principle of extreme economy affected my playing when re-learning Ginastera's Piano Sonata No. 1.

Re-learning Ginastera's Piano Sonata No. 1 in this new way not only enabled me to gain a fresh perspective on the work but it also allowed me to achieve a deeper understanding of the music. Such a process of re-learning involved applying 'restored behaviour' (after Schechner 2002) in a more informed manner, that is, becoming aware of that which I had done before and implementing creative, new behaviours and actions that were more efficient to such a process. I developed this awareness by thinking and discussing advantages and disadvantages of my practice behaviours and habits with Antonelli and Lieb in New York

⁵⁶ This excess muscular effort causes compression on joints and nerves that contributed to pain, stress, and fatigue I experienced when first learning twentieth-century Argentine music in Perth.

(after Parncutt 2008: 8). By engaging in this process I realised how the actions in which I engaged did not utilise my energy most efficiently, such as rushing through difficult passages. When I slowed this process down, it allowed me time as well as the physical space or 'freedom' to identify the best possible movements for each note, particularly large leaps, and to find the most efficient way to save energy.

As a result of the insights gained in applying Alexander Technique and Antonelli's overarching economic approach, I was able to 're-perform' Ginastera's Piano Sonata No. 1 in a way that engaged efficient mental and muscular activity. In doing so, I also found that I produced a stronger tone quality as well as feeling comfortable, even in the most difficult passages. Now when I think about utilising my body movements and energy first and foremost, the sound (or musicality) is directly affected and results in a more connected legato, continuance between large leaps, and stronger technical mastery with each individual finger. As a result, I feel stronger as a piano player when I first approach the music from a physical, kinetic movement perspective. Such an approach presents new challenges and serves to focus my attention on the connection between each note written on the page.

In New York, I decided to give a 'private' informal concert at my apartment for friends in order to perform for the first time applying the new approach to piano I was learning. In total, eighteen people attended the event, mostly postgraduate students in their mid-twenties at Columbia University. The purpose for this performance was to be physically relaxed the whole time, to move with free gestural movements, and to keep a very close physical connection to the keyboard with my fingertips. Another significant part of this performance was to receive audience feedback. According to Davidson (2001: 237), body movements play a 'critical role' in the process of musical communication. Members of the audience present at aforementioned recital later said that my movements were 'fluid' and enabled their imaginations to take flight. Another way in which I engaged the audience before playing was

to briefly describe the pieces that I was about to perform. Following the performance, several audience members commented on how they found the short ‘verbal’ introduction to be very helpful (Davidson 2001: 238). Davidson (2001: 238) describes how such verbal codes are potentially ‘useful and important’ in musical performance. In this performance, the verbal codes and body movements (non-verbal communication) served to connect and make meaningful the message performed.

As I ‘challenged’ myself to perform to this gathering and apply what I had learned in New York this experience served to bring meaning to that which I had learned. For example, the gestures I had learned from Antonelli (2013) communicated to the audience through my application of the technical aspect the musical expressive intentions. Accordingly, I realised that my performances prior to New York were always affected by extra tension due to the demands and stress of live performance resulting in feeling exhausted after a performance. However, I enjoyed this performance, and felt comfortable whilst playing, causing me to realize that I had found a way for my body to be used ‘comfortably and effectively for technical and expressive performer audience affect’ (Davidson 2001: 238). Consequently, as a performance ethnographer, I have learned how to become comfortable in my own skin, in my performance. I have also developed an ability to communicate that which I feel in the music to the audience through visual ‘movement’ communication. In this way, I am better able to demonstrate my musical ideas to the audience (see Davidson 2001: 239).

Question Space No. 2: ‘Breaths’

As a result of considering the physical aspect of playing the piano during my studies in New York, I also addressed a question space that focused on the expressive timing and placing of the musical material by identifying ‘breaths’ in the musical material (after Heaton 2012: 102). With reference to his study on performance practice, Heaton (2012: 103) proposes that

instead of exaggerating the musical material, one is required to interpret the ‘relative freedom of expressive timing and placing’ that each performer interprets for him or herself. Taking each ‘fragment’ and placing it in ‘space’ was a task that I found overwhelming prior to New York (Heaton 2012: 2). In order to address this question space of identifying ‘breaths’ in the music, I further explored the connection between Argentine folk dances (such as the *malambo*, *chacarera* and *gato*) and twentieth-century Argentine piano music, and how composers integrated musical characteristics from such dances into their compositions, in particular, Ginastera’s Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 22.

As a composer, Ginastera felt a deep bond to his nation and he considered himself a spokesman representing his society through his music. He did this by incorporating dance rhythms from the folk dances of Argentina into his compositions. Looking closely at the score, I noticed the first nine measures of Ginastera’s Piano Sonata No. 1 begin with the *malambo*, a folk dance that depicts men fighting against attacks on their property. The following three measures are calmer as if saying everything is going to be ok. Then the attack



comes back for another five measures followed again by the ‘calming down’. In this way, the movement is in continual dialogue between fighting and calming down (see excerpt below).

(Ginastera 1954)

In order to accomplish Ginastera's affect, I had to make some technical adjustments. For example, the first beat of the bar is always accented, which is how the men dance the *malambo*. I was not doing this, tending to accent the highest note under the assumption that the highest point in the phrase is the climax. When I changed this, the whole sound of the piece was transformed. I also made more marked contrasts between sections by including a 'breath' in the music such as between the 'scream' section and the 'calmer' section. Prior to New York, I played the movement all the way through without 'breaths'. These changes made a huge difference to the ways listeners responded to my interpretations of twentieth-century Argentine piano works.⁵⁷ One way in which listeners responded to when I played with 'breaths' was that the music had more character with each section clearly defined aurally for the audience and more contrast in dynamics. When I played the music all the way through without any breaths, however, audience members commented that although it was very impressive it all sounded the same. It seems that from these responses, audiences like to be able to follow the music aurally, and this is made possible with 'breaths' in the music. When it is played throughout without 'breaths' listeners feel overwhelmed.

Piazzolla's *Invierno Porteno* (Winter in Buenos Aires, tango) is another piece that I learned to perform with many 'breaths' that are not explicitly marked in the score, yet which follow the musical ideas present in the composition. When I first started to learn the piece,

Antonelli played it to me in order to demonstrate the soul and feel of tango. As a result, my

⁵⁷ As part a two-week series for Antonelli's of book presentation on piano technique and interpretation at the Argentine Consulate, Antonelli presented her book and gave a piano performance. During the second week, Antonelli presented me as her international student to give a speech about my experiences learning Argentine piano music with her and to present a solo piano performance of the Argentine repertoire I had learned. After this performance in May 2013, I received rave reviews from people in the audience, including the Governor of the Consulate, and Ginastera's daughter, Georgina Ginastera, who travels the world to listen to performances of her father's work. Georgina highly respects Antonelli's interpretations of her father's music that she made a special trip from Argentina to come hear me play that night. Her response was very positive, and she liked how I performed the first and fourth movement of Ginastera's Piano Sonata No. 1. Note: I did not perform the second and third movements during this performance.

preconceived ideas about how musical material should be played were completely revised. For example, and in this style, a group of four quavers is not played in straight rhythm, but performed with a slight swing. Concerning the question space of where to place ‘breaths’, Antonelli’s suggestions enabled me to identify the musical phrases (indicated in the excerpt below by ‘V’ marks according to the natural ‘breath’ of the bandoneon). Another musical feature in this tango is a phrase of four chromatically descending semiquavers that must be played in imitation to the bandoneon,⁵⁸ the quintessential Argentine instrument typically played in tango bands. This is seen in bar 28 of the excerpt below.



(Piazzolla 1969)

When I play this phrase dramatically it makes the music to come alive. As a result, the feedback from members in the audience regarding my interpretation of this tango was positive, with some people saying they had heard many versions of this tango but now preferred mine. In light of this, identifying and utilising ‘breaths’ in the music produced positive audience responses to the performance.

⁵⁸ The bandoneon emigrated from Germany to Argentina in 1870. It is similar to an accordion but with a rich, velvety tone. Unlike the accordion, however, the bandoneon does not have keys but has buttons on both sides.

Conclusion

My experiences in New York enabled me to explore new creative approaches to playing not only twentieth-century Argentine piano music but piano music in general. Such approaches addressed physical movements and expressive gestures, as well as musical characteristics evident in Argentine folk dances (for example, the *gato* and the *malambo*). As a result, I am able to address the ‘question spaces’ (after Pasler 2008) of ‘physical movement’ and ‘breaths’ that have arisen. Applying the concept of ‘restored behaviour’ (after Schechner 2002) to the question space of ‘physical movement’ enabled me to develop greater awareness and the ability to implement new approaches to playing piano music, especially in relation to the physical difficulties encountered when learning Ginastera’s Piano Sonata No. 1. Likewise, engaging in ‘restored behaviour’ with regards to the question space of ‘breaths’ enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the folk dance-inspired rhythms and connection with the landscape and *gaucho* (cowboy) of Argentina. These experiences have also allowed me to develop as a performance ethnographer (after Denzin 2003) and further establish my identity as a performer. The following chapter provides a critical reflection on two performances I presented on my return to Perth (post New York) and how, by adapting to new challenges, I continued to develop my identity as a performer of twentieth-century Argentine piano music in Perth.

Chapter Three:

Critical Reflections on Two Recitals in Perth, Western Australia

In order to reflect on my development as a performer of twentieth-century Argentine piano music, in this chapter I critically reflect on two recitals that I presented in Perth, Western Australia, following my study in New York. The first performance took place on 1 September 2013 at St. Georges College,⁵⁹ and the second, my Masters recital, on 8 October 2013 in the Callaway Music Auditorium in the School of Music, The University of Western Australia (UWA). By reflecting on these two recitals, I explore how my learning experiences in Perth and New York informed my performance of the repertoire presented, why I chose to play compositions in a particular manner, as well as documenting the changes that I made to the pieces, particularly Piazzola's *Tango Invierno Porteno* and *Balada para un loco*, in preparation for the performances. In order to contextualise my experiences, I draw upon Rosen's (2002) work concerning the experience of playing the piano and Howat's (1995) ideas pertaining to the interpretation of notation. Issues of interpretation, and how I explored a variety of contrasting ideas presented to me by instructors in one-on-one lessons and in public masterclasses,⁶⁰ inform this discussion.

I explored contrasting ideas pertaining to the interpretation of the pieces played in each recital and this challenged me to question and consider different physical approaches to the music. By considering issues such as my own 'style' of playing, which I believe has developed significantly during my Masters candidature due to the wide variety of influences that have impacted on my piano playing, I am now able to identify ideas that work within my performance 'style'. Such realisations are the result of establishing connections with concert

⁵⁹ A university hall of residence at The University of Western Australia, St. Georges College hosts a concert series each semester that features student and staff performances. I undertook to deliver one such concert as a way of preparing for my Masters recital.

⁶⁰ I participated in two public masterclasses performing *Ravel's Valses Nobles et Sentimentales*, the first with Roy Howat on 19 August, 2013, and the second with Maurizio Baglini on 21 September, 2013.

pianists and undertaking performance-based practice research in relation to piano playing. In order to consider how such issues influenced my piano playing, I will now explore ideas presented by Rosen (2002) on piano playing followed by Howat's (1995) discussion on the interpretation of piano music.

Reconceptualisation as a Pianist

With reference to his research on piano performance, Rosen (2002: vii) explores the experience of playing the piano from a pianist's perspective. Such research is relevant for all pianists because it considers all aspects of playing the piano, including the physical, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional. In his articulation of the interaction between these aspects, Rosen (2002) provides a framework through which I can conceptualise my experiences as a pianist. One factor important to the re-conceptualisation of myself as a pianist and performer studying twentieth-century Argentine repertoire concerns the changes that have affected my physical approach to playing the piano. Such changes have allowed me to address the question space of 'physical' pain (after Pasler 2008), which in turn enabled me to implement effective physical movements and gestures (see chapter two). Accordingly, such movements and gestures were evident in my two recitals in Perth, WA. Indeed, since returning to Perth, and after presenting two solo performances, I have come to understand myself as a pianist who is interested in the mechanics and difficulties of playing the piano. In light of this, I not only approach performance as an art, but also a form of athletic sport (see Rosen 2002: 4).

In his research on playing the piano, and through an examination of the history of piano performance and composition, Rosen (2002) highlights how Western art music focuses on the athletic or artistic characteristics. For example, in the Classical period, composers largely produced aesthetically pleasing and easy to play music for amateurs (Rosen 2002: 8).

However, composers such as Beethoven and Mozart chose also to push the boundaries of ‘easy’ music (Rosen 2002: 8).⁶¹ According to Rosen (2002: 6), it was initially with the generation of composers ‘that followed Beethoven that the performer must experience physical pain’. For instance, the *Out of Doors Suite* (1926) by Béla Bartók reveals how the composer made playing the piano ‘even more athletic by writing parallel ninths’ (Rosen 2002: 7).⁶²

By considering the physical aspects of my two recitals, I seek to privilege the mechanics involved in the ‘realization of the sound’ (Rosen 200: 12). According to Rosen (2002: 12), this approach challenges the ‘ancient aesthetic prejudice’ that music should be conceived as an abstract form, privileging the intellect and ‘ethereal’ mind over the ‘morally inferior’ body. Such a position separates the body and mind. However, in my preparation for the two recitals in Perth, I was presented with the question, ‘how do I mentally and physically own this performance in order to play the most confidently I can?’ I felt that my mind and body must be connected in order to play confidently. As a result, I found that it was unhelpful to perpetuate the mind-body split.⁶³

In order to address this issue, I draw upon renowned Scottish pianist Roy Howat’s (1995: 3) ideas relating to interpretation and performance, as well as my experiences of working with Howat in a masterclass and private lesson in August 2013 at UWA. With reference to musical interpretation, Howat (1995: 3) concedes that the only aspect one can ‘interpret’ in the music is its notation, and that one’s ‘musical feeling remains the strongest and final link to what the composer sensed and heard before subjecting it to notation’. In light of this, a music performer must consider ways in which notation can provide direction. Such

⁶¹ An example of technically challenging music is Beethoven and Mozart’s late piano sonatas (Rosen 2002: 22-23).

⁶² Rosen (2002: 7) also highlights Elliot Carter’s Piano Sonata (1947) as ‘athletic’ due to the parallel octaves. This sonata precedes Ginastera’s Piano Sonata No.1, Op. 22 (1952) by five years, a work containing parallel octaves and repetitive ninths that I performed in my recitals.

⁶³ For further discussion of the dualism of the mind-body connection, see Rene Descartes’ *The Description of the Human Body* (1647) and *Passions of the Soul* (1969)..

indications concerning the notation of twentieth-century Argentine piano music provide ample detail, and I came to realise that it is important that one does not add extra detail to what is provided.

If one ignores the composer's intentions in the score because one 'feels' it another way then such an approach is 'no better than the obedient dullard who merely shelters behind the notation' (Howat 1995: 4). Similarly, if one does not honestly consider the notation this method can throw oneself 'into the lion's den of received tradition' (Howat 1995: 4). Indeed, by playing the music according to another person's ideas (such as a concert pianist who has recorded the particular music) without fully considering the notation for oneself, one risks being a 'copy' of that person's interpretation, even if that interpretation is musically pleasing. Consequently, it is better that each performer considers for herself the notation on the score and remains true to it. In order to do so, one must examine the forms of notation.

Howat (1995: 4) describes the forms of notation available to performers today to enhance their performance including: composers' manuscripts, composers' recorded performances (a kind of notation), and analytical diagrams. Such forms of notation provide the detail necessary to perform the music intelligently. In contrast to following the exact notation on the page, traditional musicology seeks to 'interpret' music according to aesthetic ideas established about music. For example, the idea that French music is to be played in a 'haze of rubato, when first-hand memoirs tend to indicate the very opposite'⁶⁴ identifies problems in regards to interpreting this music. Such an idea of rubato overriding a strict pulse is not stated in the score, but assumed by some performing pianists at the expense of the actual music on the score intended by the composer.

⁶⁴ One example of a first-hand memoir I accessed was *Ravel according to Ravel* (Perlemuter and Jourdan-Morhange 1988) that includes details about each of Ravel's piano compositions through an interview with Perlemuter who studied one-on-one with Ravel. One issue that Perlemuter addressed was the fact that Ravel wanted his music to be played strictly in time, and where it is indicated in the score to slow down at end of sections it is to be only very slight. Even Ravel's use of rubato (only where indicated) was to be a 'hint' of rubato and never too much (Perlemuter and Jourdan-Morhange 1988).

Traditional ideas concerning performance also indicate that one must perform according to an established performance tradition. Stone (2008: 136) defines such a traditional stance towards ‘performance theory’ as ‘the ways of interpreting scores that are passed down in the performing culture, in contrast to details written in notation’. Accordingly, traditional ‘performance theory’ pertains to that which adheres to a particular set of musical rules or guidelines in a specific socio-cultural context. However, such a position risks adding musical ideas that may not be in the score.

As a result of my examination of ‘performance theory’ and interpretation, I sought to play according to the notation in the score and this, in turn, determined my physical movements. According to Shove and Repp (cited in Rink 1995: 55), musical scores provide ‘general instructions’ on how a player must execute and physically control their actions. As a result, how one performs and physically approaches the music is a decision one reaches through the experience of performing. Consequently, music evokes ‘images of movement’ which are associated with the musical experience of performing (Shove and Repp cited in Rink 1995: 55). In light of this, the interpretation of the music directly determines the physical movements involved in producing it and such movements become a part of the interpretation (Rosen 2002: 31). Likewise, Rosen (2002: 20-21) states that the movements of the hand and arm ‘should be in keeping with the musical conception’.

One misconception about playing the piano is that one can control the ‘beauty’ of tone. Despite beliefs of generations of teachers, however, it is not possible for one to push down a key ‘more gracefully’ that will affect the resulting sound (Rosen 2002: 24). Due to the mechanics of the piano, the only thing a pianist can control is to play louder and softer, faster and slower (Rosen 2002: 24). As a result of my time in New York and by means of developing new ways of physically approaching playing the piano, such as developing strength in each finger in order to exploit the balance of sound when playing multiple notes at

once, I established movements that were effective physically and produced a musical tone. In using the term ‘effective physically’, I mean movements that do not cause unnecessary tension, and the implementation of expressive gestures that add to the visual representation of the musical effect for the audience (Rosen 2002: 28). I felt that I learned how to utilise the expressive features of the piano (loud, soft, fast and slow) without any tension and the balance of these features is what produces a musically pleasing sound. As a result, I allowed the piano to do what it was capable of without fighting it to do what it could not do.

Ultimately, playing the piano is a personal decision, one that should be unique and comfortable to each performer. One of the most significant performances in my development during my Masters candidature was when I performed twentieth-century Argentine piano music at my first recital at St Georges College in Perth following my study in New York. The following section documents the changes I made in preparation for this recital.

Recital at St George’s College

In preparation for the recital at St George’s College on 1 September 2013,⁶⁵ I took time to consider the musical notation in closer detail than before (after Howat 1995: 3). For example, as I highlighted particular indications in the scores of the Argentine piano music, such as *muy espressivo*, *energico* and *doloroso* in a more articulated and effective manner, I felt that this performance was the best I had done yet. As a result, I realised that the more one is intimately familiar with the music, the more one can apply effective musical expressions. Other slight changes I made in preparation for this performance included correcting some passages that I

⁶⁵ In this concert I performed Ugarte’s *Romantico* (prelude) and *Suite de Mi Tierra*, followed by *William’s El Rancho Abandonado*, Piazzolla’s *Tango Invierno Porteno* and *Balada para un Loco*. Following a twenty minute interval, I performed the first six dances of Ravel’s *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales*. I chose to include the Ravel *valsés* into the program as it shares the dance theme that characterises the Argentine piano works. In addition, Argentine composers established a strong musical link to France, as Ugarte, Williams, Ginastera and Piazzolla each studied music in France at some point in their musical career. Thus, I felt that it was appropriate to include a work by a French composer. In addition, Ravel, influenced greatly by jazz in the United States, sought to adapt ideas from jazz into his *valsés* and such an approach mirrors Piazzolla’s aim to combine jazz elements into tango and classical music. I finished the Recital with the third and fourth movements of Ginastera’s Piano Sonata No. 1.

did not play rhythmically according to the notation (Howat 1995: 3). Indeed, my tendency to be a little too liberal with timing in these passages was not in keeping with the composers' intentions. By addressing such issues, I was able to apply physical movements that I had learned in New York that contributed more to the rhythmic and 'musical conception' in this performance (Rosen 2002: 20-21).

In order to provide further insight regarding the 'musical conception' of compositions, I also presented a short verbal introduction before playing each piece. For example, before playing Ugarte's *Suite de Mi Tierra*, I described how the composer, inspired by the Argentine poet Estanislao del Campo, provided a musical depiction of a line from Estanislao's poem to each movement. This enabled the audience to contextualize this work and imagine the scene that the poem and music describes. The audience responded well to this approach and afterwards I received great audience feedback. My own analysis of this performance highlighted that my performance of Piazzolla's *Tango Invierno Porteno* (Winter in Buenos Aires) (1970) and *Balada para un Loco* (Ballad for a Madman) (1969) to be my most enjoyable and strongest performances.

For my first public performance of *Balada*, I developed my own interpretation of the work after returning to Perth from New York. I developed my interpretation of this work by listening to a variety of audio recordings performed by Piazzolla (on the bandoneon) and Argentine singer Amelita Baltar.⁶⁶ In order to develop a solo piano rendition for *Balada*, I examined the meaning of the lyrics (which are in Spanish)⁶⁷ and this enabled me to better understand the musical context and how to best express the composer's intentions. Accordingly, the lyrics provided me with direction as to how the musical material should be

⁶⁶ This tango was originally performed as a sung tango with lyrics by Horacio Ferrer and was the most successful popular tango song in the Piazzolla-Ferrer collaboration. The first performance of this tango created controversy as it marks a break from the traditional tango form; there were shouts of 'go and wash dishes' and coins thrown onto the stage (Azzi and Collier 2000: 112-113).

⁶⁷ The lyrics, by Horacio Ferrer, detail Ferrer's feelings of melancholy whilst walking down a street in Buenos Aires. One verse states: 'I know I'm crazy, crazy, crazy, Don't you see the moon rolling along Avenida Callao, the file of astronauts and children, with a waltz, dancing around me? Dance! Come! Fly!'

performed. I also sought to imitate the tango rhythm of a slight ‘swing’ in the quavers and take liberty with timing at dramatic points according to the lyrical content. One of the noted features in Piazzolla’s recorded performances of the *Balada* is that he increases the speed incrementally at each new section. However, in order to create this effect, I had to establish a set tempo for each section. I also attempted to create dramatic changes in dynamics (from *piano* to *fortissimo*), a skill I had developed under Antonelli in New York. Thus, in the weeks leading up to the St George’s Recital, I focused particularly on developing the musical character in this work. I also adopted a similar approach to my preparation of Piazzolla’s *Tango Invierno Porteno*. I felt that this tango required a more melancholic⁶⁸ approach and shorter dramatic phrases than in the *Balada*. Furthermore, and in both of these tangos, I utilised a strong physical and rhythmic approach that I had learned whilst studying in New York.

Recital at Callaway Music Auditorium

The second performance in Perth, for my Masters Recital⁶⁹, took place on 8 October 2013 in Callaway Music Auditorium at UWA. In preparation for this recital I took responsibility for my own learning by utilising the feedback I received from a wide variety of teachers and concert pianists and adapting it to my own ‘style’ of performance (after Howat 1995: 4). As a result, I felt that I took responsibility by implementing ideas that had been presented to me while also attempting to remain true to the notation. For example, implementing ideas presented to me in a masterclass by Roy Howat (2013), such as to not ‘interpret’ staccato in Ravel’s *valse*s when there was no marking to do so, and to hold the note for the value it is

⁶⁸ *Tango Invierno Porteno* reflects characteristics associated with the tango such as melancholy, nostalgia, sadness and disappointment from the displaced immigrants who came from Europe to Argentina in the twentieth century. The *Tango Invierno Porteno* reflects these feelings (Denniston 2007: 11-14).

⁶⁹ In this Recital I performed Ugarte’s *romantico* (prelude) and *Suite de Mi Tierra*; Williams’ *El Rancho Abandonado*, Piazzolla’s *Tango Invierno Porteno* and *Balada para un Loco*; Ravel’s *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales* (the complete work); and Ginastera’s Piano Sonata No 1 (complete four movements).

given in the score. Similarly, in order to understand how to interpret the aforementioned tangos by Piazzolla, I sought to draw upon the ideas presented to me by Rosa Antonelli in New York vis-à-vis the rhythm and ‘feel’ of tango that is not directly written in the notation⁷⁰. In addition, drawing from an understanding of the Argentine folk dances, such as the *malambo* and *chacarera* that influence the Argentine piano works, enabled me to gain insight into the music. Such an understanding is significant because it revealed that the rhythm of the Argentine folk dances is a feature of the Argentine piano works. Establishing movements that were strong and comfortable also enabled me to play with confidence and to the best of my ability.

By implementing ideas presented to me from Roy Howat, Maurizio Baglini, and Rosa Antonelli to the Ravel *valse*s and the Argentine piano music provided me with deeper insights into various musical effects, such as identifying inner voices of which I had been unaware, as well as the ability to identify the ‘feel’ of the dance-like musical characteristics in several of the works. One example of implementing feedback from Howat (2013) on playing the first *valse* of the Ravel is that I applied syncopated pedalling within the first four measures to enrich the musical character. In the excerpt below, I pedalled on the first beat and released the pedal in between beats 2 and 3. This created a dramatic effect. (See also Recital DVD 1-15.00).



(Ravel 1911)

⁷⁰ In order to perform the tango according to how the composer meant it to be played, the performer must understand that a group of four quavers are not played in straight rhythm. There is a slight swing that is ‘felt’ by the performer. This is the tango effect.

Another issue of which I became aware as a result of feedback from Howat (2013) was to be careful not to use excessive rubato in the performance of Ravel.

With reference to this observation, Howat (2013) advised that Ravel was very strict with tempo and intended for his music to be played strictly in time unless specifically marked ‘rubato’. This occurs in only one waltz (the second). At the end of some sections Ravel marks *sans ralentir* (without slowing down) and *cédez a peine* (slow hardly at all).⁷¹ In order to create musical coherence between sections of the work without slowing down, I also utilised variations in dynamics and slight ‘breaths’ in the music that I had learned to do in New York under Antonelli’s guidance (see chapter two). The ‘breaths’ enabled me to indicate the musical structure without sacrificing the speed. Such an approach enabled me to present the repertoire according to my own ‘style’ of playing. This also allowed me to better grasp the musical character of the works, and to take full responsibility for how I played the music.

As a result of applying the ideas presented to me by Howat and Antonelli I felt that my understanding and performance of not only the Ravel *waltzes* but also the Argentine piano music developed in such a way that I established a strong and confident performance. In addition, the implementation of expressive gestures to the Argentine piano works whilst under the guidance of Antonelli in New York, served to help me address the physical challenges when applied to the Ravel *waltzes* (such as playing deep into the keys).

Gestures added to the visual representation of the musical effect and understanding for the audience (Rosen 2002: 28). For example, Howat’s approach to Ravel’s *waltzes*, one that is rhythmically strong and stable, reflects ideas presented to me by Antonelli in the performance of the Argentine piano music, such as the Ginastera’s Piano Sonata No. 1, and the works by Ugarte, Williams and Piazzolla. Despite the stylistic differences between these pieces, the application of expressive physical gestures to the works also enabled me to have more control

⁷¹ Howat (2013) also advised in the masterclass that Ravel’s use of the term *rallentando* indicates to ‘ease off but not park’ revealing that one must not slow down too much (see also Perlemuter and Jourdan-Morhange 1988; and Howat 2009).

of my performance. As a result, I could produce a wide range of dynamic affects from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*. I also adopted a strong yet individual rhythmic character for each work based on my understanding of the Argentine folk dances and historical background to the composers and works. Thus, and by exploring and applying a wide variety of feedback from my connections in New York and Perth, I identified aspects of interpretation and movements that are useful to the performance of both Ravel and twentieth-century Argentine piano music.

Conclusion

By reflecting on the two recitals presented in Perth in September and October 2013, I now realise that when I ‘own’ each piece, physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally, I believe that I perform with much more confidence and personal technical assurance. Certainly, there will be those who disagree with my interpretation of the music, but to me that is not the primary aim of performance. Producing a ‘perfect interpretation’ of the music is not possible, and it was not my aim in my recitals. Instead, my development as a pianist during my Masters degree has challenged me to articulate the aim of my performances and to utilize the forms of notation that are available. I now realise that if I play according to another person’s musical taste and interpretation I risk the expense of not owning the music as my own by simply following the dictates of ‘received tradition’ (Howat, cited in Rink 1995: x). By not clarifying my interpretation of the music, my performance will be mentally unstable. This is not ideal because it causes me to make mistakes, feel pressure and lack the necessary clarity that is required to perform in a particular manner. In addressing this dilemma, I sought to understand the music and interpretation, first, according to the forms of notation available such as first-hand memoirs, secondly, through consultations with specialists such as

Antonellia and Howat, and, finally, by reflecting on my physical approach to playing the piano. As a result, I believe that I forged new approaches that required me to take responsibility of my performance and interpretation and enabled me to establish my own 'style' as a performing artist of twentieth-century Argentine piano music.

Chapter Four:

Conclusion

Key Findings

This thesis has sought to contribute to performance studies and performance practice research by focusing on twentieth-century Argentine piano music. In order to do so, the thesis has examined how Argentine composers incorporated Argentine folk music and dance elements into a Western classical form in order to create an Argentinian art music. The academic study of the research developed alongside my performance project which focused on piano works by Alberto Ginastera, Floro Ugarte, Alberto Williams, Maurice Ravel, and tangos by Astor Piazzolla. The study investigated the historical development of contemporary Argentine piano music, from its origins in the late nineteenth century, and its association with the *gaucho* tradition, to the development of the genre in the twentieth century by Argentine composers. Indeed, the investigation revealed that Argentine piano music is rich in cultural symbolism, a characteristic that also features in the output of many literary writers who also sought to establish ‘Argentine’ characteristics by drawing upon the *gauchesco* legacy, as well as the folk dances and merging polarities of rural and urban Argentina (for example, the rural folklore dances and tango, the urban dance, and so forth). Consequently, this study has found that national folk dance, music and the *gauchesco* tradition are important and significant to Argentine piano music.

By undertaking study with Rosa Antonelli in New York, US, this project explored important issues relating to twentieth-century performance practice by examining a series of ‘question spaces’ (after Pasler 2008). The first ‘question space’ examined my physical approach to the piano as a result of experiencing tensions and some pain in my forearm and wrists, particularly when playing the Ginastera’s Piano Sonata No. 1, Op 22. I found that by

applying Antonelli's (2013) concept of physical economy to the piano, I became more relaxed and in control of my performance. In addition, the one-on-one instruction in the Alexander Technique under Brooke Lieb (2013) enabled me to release all tension by adjusting everyday physical actions that created unnecessary stress on my body. By examining the second question space of 'breaths', I was also able to arrive at new interpretative approaches to the Argentine piano pieces. Such approaches were informed by the historical investigation (such as the influence of the *gaucho*) that preceded my study in New York and also insights gleaned from Antonelli (2013) in regards to the performance of these pieces.

Finally, by critically reflecting on the process of playing and performing the Argentine piano music in two recitals in Perth, Western Australia, 2013, I realise that such a process has enabled me to achieve an economical physical approach to piano playing, in general, and an intimate understanding of the Argentine piano pieces, in particular. By drawing on auto-ethnographic approaches, I now have a deeper understanding into how to be prepared mentally, physically and emotionally for performance, and I learned that being confident in my own 'style' of performance is paramount to producing a confident presentation. By taking responsibility for the development of my interpretation of the piano pieces, I developed new approaches, such as utilising first-hand memoirs and other forms of notation available to the performer (see Howat 1995). Accordingly, I was able to establish myself within my own 'style' as a performing artist of twentieth-century Argentine piano music.

Theoretical Strengths

Because academic research pertaining to contemporary Argentine piano music remains an area ripe for investigation (see introduction), this study sought to fill this gap. By drawing

upon established theories and ideas of significant performance practice scholars, including Nissman (2002), Rosen (2002, 2012) and Howat (1995), I sought to examine how these scholars practised performance as research. In addition, I drew upon the field of performance studies in order to provide a context for the study, namely the work of significant performance studies scholars, such as Goffman (1959), Denzin (2003), Pasler (2008) and Davidson (2007). This enabled me to create a strong theoretical framework with which to examine my own research and experiences pertaining to twentieth-century Argentine piano music. Indeed, by drawing upon the aforementioned scholars, I was able to create a framework from which I could articulate my own experiences of learning twentieth-century Argentine piano music with Antonelli (2013) and the findings that resulted from such instruction.

Methodological Novelty

This research project employed methods from auto-ethnography and performance studies including: a thorough literature review of relevant existing research; video analysis of myself playing during consultations with Rosa Antonelli, US; an interview with Alberto Ginastera's daughter Georgina Ginastera on my performance at the Argentine Consulate, New York, US; score analysis of works for piano by Ginastera, Piazzolla, Ugarte, Williams and Ravel; and, the keeping of, and reflecting on, a learning journal. In particular, the consultations with Rosa Antonelli in New York contributed to the novelty of this project, providing insights into the Argentine piano pieces through one-on-one consultations. Indeed, the consultations established a thorough grounding and knowledge of this music, and the interview with Georgina Ginastera confirmed that my development was on target. Furthermore, by engaging in the one-on-one consultations with Antonelli, I was able to acquire a more intimate understanding of her approach of physical economy to the piano and also her ideas pertaining

to the interpretation of the Argentine piano pieces. As a result, this research project adds to performance studies and auto-ethnography by providing a detailed explanation of my experiences learning Argentine piano music with Argentine pianist and specialist, Rosa Antonelli, adding to studies on performance practice as research, and in particular, to Argentine piano performance as research. By examining my experiences of learning twentieth-century Argentine piano music in New York, US, I also came to understand how to effectively perform such repertoire according to the composer's intentions. I achieved this by investigating folklore influences and nationalist debates that inspired Argentine composers to produce their piano works. Thus, this research project provides a unique and intimate perspective on the challenges associated with learning twentieth-century Argentine piano pieces by a young pianist from Perth, Western Australia.

Avenues for Future Research

My research and performing experiences during my Master's candidature have enabled me to establish new and more effective approaches to playing the piano as a pianist and to develop an intimate understanding and interpretation of twentieth-century Argentine piano works performed in my Recitals. As a result of reflecting on my two recitals in Perth, 2013, I am aware not only of the positive developments I have made as a performer, but also the scope for my further development as a pianist in the future, in particular with regards to developing a more refined control in my piano playing. Furthermore, the Argentine piano repertoire is vast and not well known, and discourses on performance practice with reference to this twentieth-century repertoire are considerably under-developed (Stewart 2004). Thus, there is room for more performance practice research and insight into the performance of twentieth-century Argentine piano music, particularly the works by Piazzolla, such as his tangos for piano which remain under-performed. Avenues for future research, therefore, could address the performance of piano tangos by Piazzolla. By including two tangos by Piazzolla in this research project that focuses on twentieth-century Argentine piano music, I have sought to contribute to discourses on performance practice as research by exploring the particular challenges I encountered in learning this music. As a result, I have also learned new approaches to piano performance in general, and in particular, an intimate understanding of the Argentine piano pieces. Thus, this research project has enabled me to develop as a performer and researcher of twentieth-century Argentine piano music.

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