

THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF  
ERNESTO LECUONA

BY

GLORIA CASTIEL JACOBSON

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A MIS QUERIDOS PADRES

BELINA Y ALBERTO

CON TODO MI AMOR

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This work has become reality only through the cooperation of a group of people sincerely dedicated to the goal of preserving the memory and music of Ernesto Lecuona.

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Songs

Por eso te quiero, 4-20  
Noche azul, 3-18  
Lamento africano, 6-22  
Aquella tarde, 1-20

Piano Music

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En tres por cuatro, 1-9, 21-26  
Ahí viene el chino, 1-10, 27-38, 88-90  
A la antigua, 1-8  
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La habanera, 1-8

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El cafetal: Lamento africano, 7-20, 81-95  
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OF ERNESTO LECUONA

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Gloria Castiel Jacobson

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Ernesto Lecuona (1895-1963), Cuban composer-pianist, achieved worldwide recognition during his lifetime. There is, however, very little information available on him. Nothing of consequence has been written either in Spanish or in English on the influential composer; sheet music is difficult to locate, and very few recordings are available for study.

This paper examines both the personal and professional life of Ernesto Lecuona as well as representative works chosen from his vast output. These have been primarily selected from the composer's songs, piano music and zarzuelas.

Data for the study have been gathered from a variety of sources, including interviews with significant persons in Lecuona's life and career, music publishers and foreign and domestic libraries.

Findings show that Lecuona was a prolific composer of music in a great variety of media. His works appealed to everyone, from the sophisticated musician to the layman. Many of his works became international hits, such as "Malagueña," "Andalucía," "Always in My Heart," and "Siboney." As pianist and performer of his own works, he appeared in almost every major theater both in Cuba and abroad, including Central and South America, the United States, and Europe.

The one factor, above all others, which won his music such wide acceptance was the composer's use of Spanish and Afro-Cuban forms and rhythms in almost every one of his works.

Lecuona's influence was not confined to music. He made statements, through his zarzuelas, on the lifestyle and socio-political conditions of Cuba; he was also influential in bringing recognition to a multitude of artists. Most importantly, Lecuona inspired young composers by demonstrating how fertile the field of Afro-Cubanism was, both in Cuba and abroad.

Lecuona, in summary, was a musician in his own right. He was also influential on Cuban society, music, and musicians. His music needs to be performed, recorded, and analyzed, and his contributions to Cuban and Latin American music included in all major music history texts.

CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

It is the purpose of this study to examine the life and music of the Cuban-born composer-pianist Ernesto Lecuona (1895-1963), and to provide a list, as complete as possible, of the composer's works. The report traces Lecuona's life from birth, covering his early musical training, family life, education, musical career, travels, and life-style, as well as his personal and professional relationships.

The composer's output in the different musical genres is analyzed in light of representative works selected for study. The report investigates Lecuona's musical style, the influences upon it, and his contribution to the music of Cuba. The list of his works identifies the majority of Lecuona's output. Some of the works are published and available; others are available but out of print; the rest are not available, never having been published.

Organization of the Study

The study is documented in seven chapters, a glossary, and two appendices. Chapter I contains introductory material: the purpose of the study, tasks of the study, need for the study, historical background, research procedure, and limitations. Chapter II is a review of the related literature. Chapter III deals with the life and musical career of Ernesto Lecuona. Chapters IV and V are devoted to an analysis of the composer's songs and piano music, respectively. The zarzuelas

are discussed in Chapter VI. The conclusions and recommendations are found in the final chapter, VII. Appendix A contains the relatively complete listing of Lecuona's works. Spanish terms used in the research are explained in the Glossary. Appendix B contains memorabilia of Lecuona, including photographs and his will.

#### Tasks of the Study

1. To determine the musical influences which played a role in the formation of Lecuona's musical style through study of representative works.
2. To study the composer's life and to identify the personal, social, and political influences upon his work.
3. To locate, acquire, and list as much of Lecuona's musical output as possible.
4. To assess the contribution of Ernesto Lecuona to the music of Cuba.
5. To identify the importance of the study of Lecuona's music outside Latin American countries.
6. To evaluate the need for the performance of Lecuona's music by music students and professional musicians.

#### The Need for the Study

Ernesto Lecuona is credited with writing no fewer than 3,500 compositions (Sperry, 1981). He was a pianist and composer known worldwide, who indefatigably toured Latin America, Europe, and the United States. Many of his pieces became best-sellers outside the island of Cuba. His works were arranged for most combinations of instruments and performed by major pianists and orchestras all over the world, particularly in the United States and Latin America.

But that was during the height of his career. It was a time when Cuba, free and independent, prided itself on its national talents, encouraged the import and export of musicians, and was eager to be recognized abroad. With the advent of the new political regime in 1959, music experienced a regression.

Today, among the Spanish-speaking community in the United States, the name and memory of Ernesto Lecuona is clear and vivid. But time has also taken its toll. With Lecuona and many of his contemporaries now dead, the music of "Cuba's No. 1 Composer" (Sargeant, 1947) seems to be suffering the same fate.

The unfortunate situation may be attributed to several factors. Of greatest importance is the obvious difficulty in locating much of the composer's music. Although some of it is published and readily available, a major portion has remained in Cuba and its libraries. Attempts of this author to establish communication with the National Library in Havana, where many of his works are suspected to be, have been unsuccessful. It appears that the Cuban government is not as yet ready to cooperate. Some music remains in the hands of zealous exiled colleagues who refuse to give it up or permit it to be reproduced for study. Still other works, unpublished, are in the possession of relatives.

Of almost equal importance is the fact that no one, in exile, has had or taken the time to write on Lecuona. In the most recent book on Cuban music, written by Cristóbal Díaz Ayala, the author makes the sad statement that "...of Lecuona there is no biography, not even a cataloguing of his output" (Ayala, 1981, p. 305). This is the case even though Lecuona's name is a household word among Spanish-speaking

musicians and laymen. Memory is failing among Lecuona's closest surviving friends, and details of his life and works are becoming less and less distinct. If not documented soon, Lecuona's life and music will remain a secret to future generations.

Outside Spanish-speaking circles, there is a much greater lack of knowledge concerning Lecuona. Reference sources give the composer a few lines, compared to their otherwise lengthy entries. This is indeed unfortunate, considering the impact Lecuona had on the music of Cuba. Textbooks on music history and, more importantly, Latin American music, have virtually nothing on Lecuona or his works, for example, the most recent book on Latin American music, entitled Music in Latin America, by Gerard Béhague (1979).

Important to the telling of Lecuona's story are a few exiled compatriots now residing in Miami, Florida. They include several remaining members of his family, close friends, and a considerable number of musicians and colleagues. Some of these people are well advanced in years, and their stories need to be heard.

Cuba has not had an abundance of composers to represent it internationally. Lecuona was one of those musicians who did, and a study of his life and music has been needed to improve our otherwise minimal knowledge of the rich musical heritage of the Island.

To summarize, this study serves the following purposes:

1. It is a comprehensive source of information on the music of Cuba and its character.
2. It sheds light on the music of the once internationally-acclaimed pianist and composer.
3. It helps to close the gap now evident in textbooks dealing with Latin American music.

4. It puts onto paper Lecuona's life story, which up to now has been plagued by inaccuracies and confusion.
5. It identifies new music for both American and Latin American musicologists to study and explore.
6. It provides pianists new literature for their repertoires.
7. When translated into Spanish, it will be a valuable source of information to Spanish-speaking musicians and laymen.

#### Background of Art Music in Cuba

Art music in Cuba may be traced back to the eighteenth century. This is a rather late start, as compared to the vast amount of art music already found in Europe at the time. Nonetheless, researchers have been unable to provide documentation for any previous significant musical activity in the Island.

It is with Estéban Salas (1725-1803), notable composer of religious and secular music, that we begin tracing the line of composers of serious music in Cuba. Antonio Raffelín (1796-1882) and Juan París (1759-1845), the classical-style composers, succeeded Salas. Manuel Saumell (1817-1870) and his contradanzas for piano represented musical nationalism, and began an important tradition in Cuban art music -- the stylization of folk music. The trend was continued and perfected by Ignacio Cervantes (1847-1905), undoubtedly one of the finest musicians of his time. Ernesto Lecuona (1895-1963), the subject of this study, provided the link between them and the twentieth-century nationalistic composers, Amadeo Roldán (1900-1939) and Alejandro García Caturla (1906-1940), who cultivated Afro-Cubanism in art music. José Ardévol (1911-) became a leader of modern music in Cuba, as well as an outstanding teacher. Best known outside the Island are Julián Orbón



(1925-) and Aurelio de la Vega (1925-). Juan Blanco (1920-) and Leo Brower (1939-) have worked in the realm of electronic and serial music.

None of the composers, however, attained the popularity and international renown of Ernesto Lecuona or had more impact upon Cuban music. Affectionately referred to as "el maestro," Lecuona's popularity rests, principally, on the wide appeal of his works. Often called the Victor Herbert of Cuba, he engaged the love and respect of the sophisticated musician and of the simple layman. He was a serious composer of popular music and a popular composer of serious music; he catered to all with his fertile imagination. Absorbing the influences of both Spanish and Cuban folk music, Lecuona's output carries a stamp uniquely his own.

Lecuona's works are well known in Latin American countries and are occasionally performed in the United States. But it is within the Cuban community that el maestro's music and memory are daily honored. He is, among the exiled Cuban population, more than a well-known composer. He is a household name, an admired musician, a loved human being. His works are performed in almost every musical event, and his compositions are a standard component of pianists' repertoire. Every year on the anniversary of his death, a recital is staged in his memory, when musicians and singers from the old times get together to remember their friend and colleague by performing his music. The admiration for Lecuona in Miami's Little Havana has culminated in the construction of an impressive monument in his honor, bearing a sculpture of the maestro at the piano, Cuba's national seal, and the inscription, "Ernesto Lecuona--Cuba's world-renowned composer and pianist. Died in Exile. 1895-1963."

The maestro is loved not only for what he was, but for what he represents: the Cuba of old, sugar cane and palm trees, song and sea. The Afro-Cuban rhythms and folk-like melodies in his music are a constant reminder to the exiled Cuban of his cherished homeland and what it once was.

#### The Research Procedure

The necessary materials for this research were gathered from three principal sources: significant persons in Lecuona's life and career, music publishers, and both foreign and domestic libraries.

Actors and singers who worked with or for Lecuona, musicians, and friends of the maestro, as well as remaining family members provided a variety of documentation pertaining to Lecuona's life and career. The material included photographs, programs of old concerts, articles that appeared in Cuban newspapers during the height of Lecuona's career, pamphlets and sheet music which had been saved throughout the years, and many other pieces of memorabilia. Most important, however, was their eagerness to relate information they were able to recall about the composer, filled with their personal outlooks, anecdotes, and that love and admiration which runs through all of them as an underground current.

Those interviewed are named in the following list:

- o Roberto Rodríguez, impresario for the Teatro Martí in Miami and Lecuona's agent in Cuba
- o Miguel de Grandy, producer of Lecuona's zarzuelas in Miami and formerly a tenor, actor, and director
- o Rolando Lluís, violinist who played under Lecuona
- o Octavio Alvarez, actor
- o Pedro Román, creator of the park and monument in Lecuona's memory

- o Ernesto García, former actor and singer
- o Ernesto Grenet, drummer and trombonist
- o Josefina LeCerff, Lecuona's sister-in-law

Correspondence was established with John Sperry, lawyer and trustee of Lecuona's estate. Edward B. Marks, music publisher and holder of the rights to most of Lecuona's music, provided a great deal of the piano literature studied throughout the work.

Domestic university libraries were used to locate some of Lecuona's music -- both recordings and sheet -- as well as relevant articles in periodicals and materials on Cuban and Latin American music. The National Library in Madrid had in its collection the most significant document discovered. The available music of Lecuona has been collected and analyzed. Chapters IV, V, and VI represent the synthesis of their study by this researcher.

The historical approach has been used to examine the data. Glen Haydon, in Introduction to Musicology (1941), addresses the problems and methods of historical research in music. In observations concerning methodology, the author states that the researcher must be able to meet three general requirements:

1. To be conscious of the existing problem
2. To define the problem, in such a way as to render it susceptible of solution.
3. To seek the integration of his particular problem with more general problems; to weave the findings into the general history of music.

Haydon also addresses the systematic orientation to musical research, which makes use of the various auxiliary sciences which contribute to the understanding of music, such as acoustics, physiology, and psychology in relation to music, aesthetics, theory, pedagogy, and

comparative musicology. He concludes that

the systematic and historical approaches constitute the two axes in the frame of references in relation to which musical intelligence is oriented. The two approaches are, of course, complementary. The one cannot be maintained without reference to the other. (Haydon, 1941, p. 10)

Information has been placed in perspective as it related to the musical history of Cuba, taking into account the forces which shaped it and those it helped shape.

#### Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study derive primarily from the paucity of extant sheet music and recordings of Lecuona's works. As stated previously, much of the composer's music is now out of print or in the hands of private individuals. Other compositions, probably housed in Cuban libraries, are practically impossible to locate at the present time.

Particular difficulty was encountered in the process of studying Lecuona's zarzuelas. None of the scores are available in the United States, even though a few of the musical numbers have been preserved and are relatively easy to find. Fortunately, recordings have been made of three of Lecuona's zarzuelas: María la O, Rosa la china, and El cafetal, permitting their study in considerably greater detail. It must be noted that the music in these recordings has been reproduced from memory by artists who had staged the works in Cuba and who, in exile, felt the need to preserve them.

In summary, this research makes the most of the material available. Items selected for study should suffice to illustrate those ideas central to an understanding of the music of Ernesto Lecuona.

CHAPTER II  
REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Literature related to the subject under study was virtually non-existent. Even the most basic information on Ernesto Lecuona was absent from standard music history texts and reference materials. Conscientious searches through domestic college and university libraries were, for the most part, fruitless.

The most important item on Lecuona thus far located was found in the collection of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid Spain. The document, an unfinished and unpublished manuscript by Arturo Ramírez (n.d), is an interesting report on the artistic trajectory of Ernesto Lecuona. Ramírez, a respected newspaper reporter, basically outlines the composer's numerous tours throughout the world. Entitled Lecuona, the manuscript is filled with a considerable number of reviews and critiques of Lecuona's appearances. The author collected the material from newspapers of many cities in several countries. The value of the work lies in the amount of information on Lecuona's personal life and the partial listing of the composer's works in an Appendix.

Regardless of its importance, the work has several serious drawbacks. First, and most important, Ramírez devotes no time to the music itself. A reader not familiar with Lecuona's output would be able to gather no clue as to the characteristics of the composer's music. This is understandable, since Ramírez was not a musicologist.

A more serious problem, given the stature of Ramírez, is the almost total omission of essential bibliographic information on the items quoted. Authors, dates, and names of the newspapers are more often than not omitted. Although Ramírez was a respected reporter, and there is probably no reason to doubt the authenticity of his quotations, it would have been helpful to obtain those newspapers. It is beyond the scope of this work to attempt such a task.

Finally, the work is not up to date. Completed before the death of the composer, Lecuona leaves many important questions unanswered about the maestro's last years.

It should also be noted that the manuscript is written in Spanish and that the author overlooked several of Lecuona's works, both major and minor, in his list.

One article each in Newsweek ("Jorge Gershwin Lecuona," 1943) and Life (Sargeant, 1947) magazines, appearing in the bibliography, are the only other sources that have dealt more or less directly with Ernesto Lecuona; however, they are brief, outdated, and general, and they provide no real insight into the composer's music.

The musical journal, Etude, has dealt in two brief articles with Lecuona's "Malagueña," mainly its key and form (Gehrkens, 1953, 1954). That is the only material which directly addresses itself to Lecuona's music.

There are other works which, although not dealing directly with Lecuona, prove to be fine background reading for the musical history of Cuba. The most recent and up-to-date is Cristóbal D. Ayala's Música cubana: del areyto a la Nueva Trova (1981). In a readable style, Ayala traces Cuban music from the displaced Indians to the present composers.

The book is well organized. It is divided into ten major parts:

- I From discovery until the end of the eighteenth century -- 1492-1799
- II The nineteenth century
- III The first twenty years of the Republic
- IV The decade of the nineteen-twenties
- V The decade of the thirties
- VI The decade of the forties
- VII The decade of the fifties
- VIII Revolutionary Cuba until Communism
- IX Cuban music in the United States
- X Cuba in exile

Included in each major part are sub-sections which deal not only with the major musical figures of each period (both popular and serious), but with the musical trends, instruments used, and socio-political atmosphere of each period.

Within the comprehensive scope of the 500-page book, Ayala manages to treat each composer with due respect, pointing out his contributions, however small, to the musical scene. Five pages are devoted to Lecuona, in which the author briefly outlines the composer's life, career, and major works. But Ayala states in the Prologue that, not being a musician, he is unable to go into any analysis of representative works of periods and composers. This is, of course, the major drawback of the book.

Other valuable works are La música en Cuba by Alejo Carpentier (1946) and Popular Cuban Music by Emilio Grenet (1939). The latter is an essay on the evolution of Cuban music, including eighty revised and corrected compositions. All popular Cuban musical forms are described

in detail, and most are notated. Grenet briefly mentions Lecuona when discussing the musical genres bordering on the African. The book is a fine resource for the popular music of Cuba. Carpentier's work concentrates primarily on the origins and historical development of Cuban music. Chapters are devoted to the major figures such as Salas, Saumell, Espadero, Cervantes, Roldán, and Caturla. Its coverage of Afro-Cubanism is excellent and a requirement for the understanding of Lecuona's music. The book is in Spanish, however, with no translation available.

Three additional and very fine related studies are Gilbert Chase's definitive The Music of Spain (1941), Nicolas Slonimsky's Music of Latin America (1945), and Gerard Béhague's Music in Latin America: An Introduction (1979). The study of these books was helpful in gaining a better understanding of the Cuban musical scene. Neither here nor elsewhere does any text or reference source contains substantive information on the composer.

The Music of Spain is an excellent account of Iberian music from the Middle Ages to the present day. One of the chapters most relevant to this study is the one on the "Rise of the Popular Zarzuela," which gives a fine overview of the form that was to influence so greatly the music of Cuba and Ernesto Lecuona.

Slonimsky's book, although now somewhat outdated, was one of the few books of its kind for many years. It is an encompassing account of the music and musicians of "the twenty republics" of Latin America. The book is divided into three parts: Panorama of Latin American Music, Music in the Twenty Republics, and Dictionary of Latin American Musicians, Songs and Dances, and Musical Instruments. In the middle



part, Slonimsky addresses the characteristic forms, dances, and rhythm patterns of each of the countries discussed. He then proceeds to give a short summary of each country's major musicians and their works.

Lecuona is included in the section on Cuba. In approximately fifteen lines, Slonimsky provides a general outline of Lecuona's life, and mentions five of his works. It is certainly a meager coverage, if one realizes that Lecuona was at the height of his career during the decades of the thirties and forties.

Music in Latin America is divided into three parts: the Colonial Period, the Rise of Nationalism, and Counter-Currents in the Twentieth Century. In each of the three parts, Béhague looks at the representative music and musicians of the Latin American countries. He quotes numerous musical examples, ranging from the sacred music of the Colonial period to the electronic works of the twentieth-century composers. Although Béhague states in the Preface that the book provides "a closer examination of some of the main works by the most representative composers of the various periods, trends, and countries," the name of Ernesto Lecuona is never mentioned. This serious omission certainly invalidates his statement.

The review of related literature suggests that research on the life and music of Ernesto Lecuona is seriously lacking and that the composer has regrettably been omitted from standard music sources. Considering the achievements of Lecuona as a pianist and composer, the impact he had upon the Cuban musical scene, and the contribution he made to it, the neglect is incomprehensible. It makes this and future studies in this area absolutely necessary.

CHAPTER III  
THE LIFE AND CAREER OF ERNESTO LECUONA

Introduction

The majority of information found in this chapter on Lecuona's life is from Lecuona, by Arturo Ramírez, and direct quotations have been translated by Gloria Jacobson. When other references have been used, the source is indicated in a citation. Unattributed information may be assumed to have been gathered from Ramírez's work.

Family Background

It was August 6, 1895 (Rodríguez, 1979)\*. For the preceding months the small island of Cuba had been struggling for independence from Spain. The populace was in turmoil. In Cerería Street (today Estrada Palma), in the village of Guanabacoa, Ernesto Lecuona-Ramos and his wife Elisa awaited the birth of their child. He was to be Ernesto Lecuona y Casado, later to be known to the world simply as Lecuona (Basque for "good place").

Lecuona's father was a Spaniard. Born in Islas Canarias (the Canary Islands), Lecuona-Ramos settled in Cuba while still in his youth

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\* There is serious disagreement as to Lecuona's birth date. It has been variously given as August 7, 1895 (Sperry, 1973), August 7, 1896 (Ramírez), and the one given here. Rodríguez asserts that although the composer liked to celebrate his birthday on August 7, his real birthday was August 6.

and soon was assimilated into the new land (LeCerff). He chose as his wife Matanzas-born Elisa Casado Bernal, by whom he had 14 children. Only seven survived to adulthood: Luis, Ernestina, José, Fernando, Teodoro, Elisa, and Ernesto, the newcomer (LeCerff, 1979). Although not wealthy, Lecuona-Ramos was a hard-working, successful newspaper man, eventually becoming the editor of El Comercio.

Elisa was a devoted wife and mother as well as a patriotic Cuban. She supported the revolution taking place, and she never concealed from her husband her dedication and commitment to the rebels' cause. Together with the children, she would invariably wave the Cuban flag in front of the house whenever any of her husband's Spanish friends visited. Elisa would also secretly contribute, with her scarce financial means, to the revolution.

It was to this family and amid political tensions that Lecuona came into the world.

#### Early Years: Musical Studies and Achievements

Lecuona's musical genius was discovered at the age of three and a half. His sister Ernestina was now a piano teacher, and at home kept the instrument under lock and key to protect it from her brothers and sisters. Little Ernesto was not to be feared, though, since he was too small to reach the keyboard. One day, while mother Elisa was in the kitchen, she was surprised to hear music being played on the piano. She knew that Ernestina and Elisita, who was now learning piano, were not at home. To her surprise she found young Ernesto at the keyboard. He was playing the bolero "Allá en las lomas" (There on the Hills), continuing with a waltz titled "Isabelita." Both of these works were often played

by Ernestina, and Ernesto had duplicated them exactly. To reach the piano, he had climbed on a box nearby.

It was then that Ernestina decided to guide her brother's talent. The musical relationship that was cemented between Ernestina and Ernesto during these early years would last a lifetime.

By the age of five, Ernesto had a diverse repertoire of five pieces, among which were "Las campanadas" (The Tolling), "La Marsellesa" (The Marseillaise), and the Cuban national anthem. It was at this tender age that Ernesto Lecuona staged his first recital, standing up at the piano, at Havana's Hispanic Club. The reviews were all extremely favorable, mentioning the child's sure and sensitive playing and big tone. He was labeled a child prodigy.

The composer's early general education was received at the school Hoyos y Junco (Martin). While Lecuona was still in school and not yet seven, two important events took place: the establishment of the Republic of Cuba on May 20, 1902, and in that same month, a few days earlier, the death of his father, of a heart attack, in Santa Cruz de Tenerife. (His mother was later to marry Pedro Montells Gil.)

Two years later, at the age of nine, Ernesto enrolled in the Conservatorio Peyrellade. Here he stayed three years furthering his musical education. He continued to study with Antonio Saavedra (pupil of Ignacio Cervantes) and Joaquín Nin (1883-1950), great Cuban-Spanish musicologist and composer. From this period came a few unpretentious piano pieces. By eleven he had written "Cuba y América," a two-step which later entered the repertoire of Cuban military bands (Sperry, 1973). Trying to earn some money for his efforts, the young composer went from door to door selling copies of his first work. He was also,

at this time, performing at the theaters Moulin Rouge and Alhambra. A little later he would write music to the buffo libretti of Arquímedes Pous and appear in several theaters accompanying singers who interpreted excerpts from Spanish zarzuelas.

At the age of fourteen Lecuona was taken by Nin to the accomplished Dutch-Cuban pianist Hubert de Blanck (1856-1932), who eagerly accepted the promising young player as his student in the Conservatorio Nacional, which he himself founded in 1885 (Parker). Lecuona graduated on April 4, 1913, at the age of 17. He earned a gold medal, the highest award for piano, for his graduation performance of Schumann's A Minor Piano Concerto ("Ernesto Lecuona, Composer of 'Siboney' Is Dead," 1963).

#### Early Works for the Theater and International Successes

During the next three years the young pianist displayed himself in the theaters around the capital. Later, in 1916, the American public had the opportunity to hear Lecuona during his first visit to New York's Aeolian Hall (Sperry, 1973). It was then that he was contracted by RCA Victor for recordings of his works, as well as by Ampico Piano Co. and Duo-Art for piano rolls. His fame spread throughout the United States; Lecuona's compositions were rich in inspiration and had his unmistakable signature. His mastery of the keyboard and his very expressive style impressed the severest critics.

In 1913 Lecuona came into the theater as composer of música de revistas, or musical reviews. Between 1919-1923, he set ten works to music, including zarzuelas, reviews and operettas. Some of the best known works from this period are Domingo de piñata (Sunday of Piñata; 1919), La Liga de las Naciones (The League of Nations; 1919), and Diabluras y fantasías (Mischiefs and Fantasies; 1922).

The year 1922 brought Lecuona his first international success, when he toured America, appearing for eight consecutive weeks at the Capitol Theater in New York. It was there that he introduced "Malagueña" and "Andalucía" (Sargeant, 1947). During the same year Lecuona busied himself with the formation of the Sociedad de Conciertos de la Habana, an organization whose purpose was to further the dissemination of symphonic music in the Island. The group eventually founded the Havana Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Gonzalo Roig.

He took the first of what were to be many trips to Spain in 1924. It was a four-month tour as accompanist to violinist Martha de la Torres. In Madrid at the end of his tour, he was contracted to set several libretti to music; the Spanish public loved him.

#### Trip to Paris: Friendship with Lortat, Orloff, and Ravel

Lecuona's first trip to Paris took place in 1928. He performed his works for piano and voice at the theaters Pleyel and Gaveau. It was at this time that he became friends with the pianists Lortat and Orloff, and expressed a wish to study under the former (Sperry, 1973). Sperry relates: "Lortat asked Lecuona to play a prelude by Debussy, Jeux d'eau by Ravel, and some of his own danzas. Whereupon Lortat said that he had nothing to give or contribute to this gifted pianist. In fact, for many years he thought that this incident was a prank planned by their mutual friends" (Sperry, 1973). Orloff was equally impressed.

It was also during this visit to Paris that Lecuona became friends with Ravel. He had been invited to spend a few days at the villa of Joaquín Nin in San Juan de Luz. Ravel was invited at the same time. So much was the French composer interested in the Cuban's "La comparsa" and "Danza negra" that he took notes with the purpose of "doing something"

orchestral with them (Sperry, 1973). Sperry also writes: "Ravel and Lecuona became warm friends and the former once said of Lecuona that he was so struck by the sheer romance and enchantment of his music that he felt that 'Malagueña' was more melodic and beautiful than his own 'Bolero'" (Sperry, 1973, p. 2).

#### Tours of Central America and a Hollywood Experience

The successful Paris tour was followed, in 1929, by a tour of Central America, to Panama and Costa Rica. Back in Havana in 1929 Lecuona premiered a series of reviews and zarzuelas which kept him occupied until the end of 1930. They included Niña Rita (1929), La liga de las señoras (the League of Ladies; 1929), and three of his best-known zarzuelas: El cafetal (The Coffee Plantation; 1929), El batey (The Sugar Mill; 1929), and María la O (1930), to be discussed later in more detail.

The year 1931 brought Lecuona the death of his mother but also great success on his first trip to Mexico, where he presented a series of concerts in the Teatro Fábregas. He was immediately invited back for another series of concerts in 1933. It was during this second trip to Mexico that he was asked to present his zarzuelas there. Bringing a company from Cuba was no easy task, for anyone but Lecuona, that is. By 1934 he had his company set up and premiered El cafetal, Rosa la china (Rosa the Chinese Woman), and Canción de flor (Flower Song), among several others, in the Iris Theater.

In between his trips to Mexico, Lecuona had his first experience with Hollywood. In 1930 he was contracted by Metro Goldwyn Mayer as musical director for the motion picture Under Cuban Skies, with Lupe

Vélez and Lawrence Tibbett ("Ernesto Lecuona, Composer of 'Siboney' Is Dead," 1963). Although it was a brilliant social and artistic adventure, the purely cinematographic aspect of it was a disaster, according to Lecuona. "Tibbett was no Cuban, even in jest. Vélez was good as a Mexican, not as a Cuban, and there was not a single Cuban landscape in the entire movie" (Ramírez, n.d., p.94).

Immediately after the completion of the music, Lecuona was invited to present a program at Los Angeles' Paramount Theater. It lasted several weeks and was very successful. Under Cuban Skies was the first of several movies with scores or musical numbers by Lecuona. Others included Carnival in Costa Rica, Always in My Heart, bearing the title of the theme song, One More Tomorrow, and Pearl Harbor.

#### 1933: Formation of "Lecuona's Cuban Boys" and Threats to Lecuona's Health

The formation of the world-renowned Lecuona's Cuban Boys was the result of a serious double pneumonia contracted by Lecuona during his 1933 visit to Madrid. The seriousness of the illness was such that Cubans and fans all over the world were awaiting the news of his death. The composer's delicate condition made headlines in newspapers throughout the world. During his illness, his orchestra "boys" were touring Spain. When he had recuperated and decided to go back to Cuba for the warm climate, he learned that his boys had received an offer from an European impresario to continue touring. Lecuona advised them to accept it and authorized the use of his name.

The year 1933 was not to be one of Lecuona's most fortunate. While back in Cuba recuperating from the double pneumonia, he seriously injured his left hand, threatening the end of his pianistic career.



Miraculously, the operation on the broken tendon in his thumb healed properly, and a few months later Lecuona was back at the keyboard.

#### The Years 1935-1942

This seven-year period was primarily one of travel. But first Lecuona devoted 1935 to organizing La Orquesta de la Habana, the first of its kind in the capital, and one which would have a long and healthy future (Ramírez, n.d.). From 1936 to 1940 he was on tour through Buenos Aires, giving recitals and playing radio engagements. He also traveled to Chile and Peru. During that time he conducted concerts with symphony orchestras and choruses and led the Lecuona Cuban Boys on tours of Europe, Latin America, and North Africa ("Ernesto Lecuona, Composer of 'Siboney' Is Dead," 1963).

During the next couple of years he premiered more zarzuelas and reviews. One of them was the popular La plaza de la catedral (The Plaza of the Cathedral). The composer suffered another career threat when he broke his right arm in a car accident. He recuperated satisfactorily.

#### Lecuona as Cultural Attaché to the Cuban Embassy

The year 1943 brought Lecuona his first recognition in the political arena. On March 24, Cuban President Fulgencio Batista appointed Lecuona honorary cultural attaché to the Cuban embassy in Washington ("Ernesto Lecuona, Composer of 'Siboney' Is Dead," 1963). Although the composer was certainly not a political figure, he was not above recognizing the concerns of the Cuban people.

Always apolitical, he nevertheless would frequently discuss with Fulgencio Batista the need to give some serious thought to reforms to alleviate the plight of those poor, in his native Cuba, that needed help. (Sperry, 1973, p. 3)

Concerts in the Pan American Union and Carnegie Hall

It was on March 31, 1943, in the middle of World War II, that Lecuona presented a concert at Washington's Pan American Union. The audience consisted of diplomatic representatives accredited in Washington. In that same year, on October 10, Lecuona presented a memorable concert in Carnegie Hall, celebrating Cuba's independence day (Sperry, 1973, p.3). At that concert he premiered Rapsodia negra and "Aragón". The program consisted primarily of his own compositions with some by his sister, Ernestina, who also appeared as pianist. The New York Times observed the following morning,

The new works, along the same lines as Lecuona's earlier output, proved like his conducting and pianism, clean-cut and brilliant. . . . A large audience received the whole program with fervent enthusiasm. ("Ernesto Lecuona Offers Cuban Program to Celebrate Country's Independence Day," 1943)

And Sperry wrote:

It might be said, without fear of contradiction, that the capacity of that hall has never been so taxed before, nor since, his memorable appearance on that occasion. (Sperry, 1973, p. 2)

Carnival in Costa Rica

Two years later, in 1945, Lecuona had renewed his exclusive contract with the Edward B. Marks Corporation when Twentieth Century Fox offered him a contract for musical directorship of the film Carnival in Costa Rica. Since his 1931 experience in Hollywood life had not been a pleasant one, the composer decided not to move to that city while working on the score. Instead, he bought a house on 86th Street in Jackson Heights, New York, and worked from there.

The years 1948 to 1950 Lecuona again spent traveling. In 1948 he performed in Washington and New York, where he once more appeared in Carnegie Hall. He toured Florida during some of 1949 and 1950, and went to Madrid towards the end of 1950.

### The Last Ten Years -- 1953-1963

Madrid was the site of Lecuona's theatrical campaign in 1953. From Cuba he imported many of his collaborators, among them tenor, actor, and director Miguel de Grandy, Ernesto García, Esther Borja, and Mimi Cal. He completed his cast with a few Spaniards, and launched an extremely successful season, opening with El cafetal at the Alvarez Quintero Theater.

Lecuona's saddest year was probably 1960, when he was forced, given the political circumstances, to flee his native land. The hopes he had nurtured for his country had all but vanished.

At first, he hoped that Fidel Castro might soon succeed where others failed. But these hopes were soon dispelled. Lecuona sought voluntary exile from his beloved land in 1960. At that time he vowed never to play again until his country was free from tyranny of the right or left. (Sperry, 1973, p. 3)

After leaving the Island, Lecuona went to Tenerife, Spain, and directed various ensembles, which he took to the Broadway, San Martín, and Ateneo theaters.

He established residence in Tampa, Florida, and lived there until his untimely death, at the age of 68, of a heart attack. He had been visiting Tenerife at the time. The date was November 29, 1963. He was buried in The Gate of Heaven Cemetery in New York (LeCerff, 1979). Lecuona wrote in his will that his remains be kept there until Cuba is once again free and sovereign. His remains are then to be taken back to the land he loved and forever interred there (Sperry, 1973).

### Physical Appearance and Personality

Ernesto Lecuona has been described as a melancholic version of the late comedian Zero Mostel (Newsweek, 1943). Indeed, Jay Nelson Tuck said that Lecuona's press agent once, finding no extra photographs of

the maestro, sent a copy of Mostel's snapshot with Lecuona's name on it to the newspapers. The photo was printed, and the exchange went unnoticed (Sargeant, 1947).

Six feet tall and large framed, the composer carried his stature with dignity and natural grace. His hair, jet black, was always immaculately kept. But by far the most attractive feature of Lecuona was his large dark eyes. With a melancholy stare they always appeared to transcend the immediate object in front of him and focus on some distant place that no one else could see. His wonderful smile would brighten his face which, as described by his friends, always carried an expression that seemed to ask, "What smells here?"

And then there were always those traces of childhood, the zest for living, and the innocence that were so refreshing to those who knew him.

Rarely could one find a soul more affiliated to childhood than that of Lecuona. The precocious artist that he has been matured in the arts, but has conserved, in life, that faith and creative enthusiasm which never gets old prematurely.

. . . . .

At home he is talkative, communicative, anecdotal, and maintains that childlike incongruity, that goes from one subject to another, without maintaining the attention or serious order of a narration. (Rosello, 1935, pp. 3-4, trans. Gloria Jacobson)

But he did have his moments of Cuban temperament, as the writer of "Jorge Gershwin Lecuona" humorously remarked:

Brewing Cuban coffee, for instance, becomes a nerve-wracking Schubert production with him. ("Jorge Gershwin Lecuona," 1943, pp. 97-98)

Affable, sincere, and unpretentious, Lecuona was never eager to talk about his successes. He was indifferent to money, even though he was quite a wealthy man. Much of his fortune went to assist maraca players and aspiring cabaret singers, both in Cuba and abroad (Sargeant, 1947).

The artist, for the sake of being, does not have that utilitarian ferocity that translates a theatrical attraction into money. The gold that the world paid to listen to Lecuona, he confided to his innocence, and it dispersed it to all the winds. (Rosello, 1935, p. 3, trans. Gloria Jacobson)

### Lifestyle

Lecuona led an unconventional life. During his stays in Cuba he lived exclusively on farms or ranches in the rural surroundings of Havana. On some of his ranches the composer raised pigs, deer, poultry, birds (he is said to have had a parrot that would sing his song "Noche azul"), fish, and turtles, among many other creatures. He would get up every morning, before any of his servants, and wearing a yarey hat and work clothes, would feed his small zoo, and water, check, and care for his plants and flowers.

He was a collector of antiques, ranging from furniture to music boxes, of which he had an extensive collection. He also collected good books, and his personal library contained volumes on world history, music history, biography, theater, poetry, music critiques, and Cuban literature. His favorite poets were Martí, Darío, Juan Ramón Jiménez, and García Lorca, among others. He was even an avid reader of Agatha Christie.

Baseball was one of his favorite hobbies, and the composer would watch or listen to all the national championships, from October to February, and to the Major Leagues and World Series from April to October. He also enjoyed poker, dominoes, cooking, and entertaining (LeCerff, 1979).

### Friends and Friendships

The composer had more than a few friends. When he moved to his most famous ranch, La Comparsa, the first thing he did was to build a cobertizo, a kind of shelter, which he called "La Cobija." This was done to accomodate the hundreds of people he called friends and who would follow him wherever he went. La Cobija was going to be the meeting place of present and future artists, known and unknown, who came to look for advice or for an opportunity to work with the maestro and to be introduced to the public. The gatherings of friends in La Cobija would start at mid-morning and last until midnight, although Lecuona himself would often have gone to sleep by that time (de Grandy).

He always had company eating at his table. He would usually cook the meals, which invariably included black beans and rice. And, if his friends were not there, Lecuona was known to sit down with his servants for his meals. Everyone enjoyed his warm personality and interesting conversation (Alvarez, 1979).

Notwithstanding his many friends, Lecuona never found a woman to share his life. But he once humorously remarked, "I'd like to collect American women. They are the most beautiful in the world". ("Ernesto Lecuona, Composer of 'Siboney' Is Dead," 1963).

### Always a Cuban

Due to the extensive traveling, Lecuona was a cosmopolitan man, but only to the extent of adapting himself to surroundings and customs, and for the appreciation of cultural interchanges. In his heart Lecuona was as criollo and tropical as any could claim to be (de Grandy, 1979). In between tours he always eagerly returned to his homeland. Sometimes he

would get homesick in the middle of a tour and come back to the sun and palm trees that had become such a part of him.

His music was for Cuba and about Cuba, and on more than one occasion he spoke of his love and devotion to the tropical island. He was a Cuban, in his music and in his deeds, to his last day.

#### Lecuona the Musician

If the personal side of Lecuona's life showed traces of eccentricity, so did the musical. Although an electrifying pianist who would hypnotize audiences, Lecuona rarely practiced.

For about 42 years now, his sister and teacher, Ernestina, has been trying to get him to practice. But he is strictly a man of moods and won't go near the instrument unless his muse is upon him. ("Jorge Gershwin Lecuona," 1943, p. 97)

But his performances were, nevertheless, faultless.

Lecuona sits on the bench and runs over the keyboard as though caressing an old friend. Most of the difficulties of execution seem to leave by themselves, as though the instrument were a tamed monster. When he is finished, el maestro salutes, and not a hair of his head has changed places. (Rosello, 1935, p. 4)

Even more peculiar than his failure to practice was the fact that he never touched the piano while composing. Friends recall his indefatigable jotting of notes in a hotel room, at a card table, or in a restaurant, and almost never making a change. He would often send compositions to publishers without having heard or played them ("Ernesto Lecuona, Composer of 'Siboney' Is Dead," 1963). The composer maintained that he did not need to play them because he knew how they sounded -- in his head (de Grandy, 1979).

Lecuona loved it all; his life was his career. "Lecuona lived a happy life because he lived doing what he wanted . . . doing what he loved" (de Grandy, 1979).

Fans, Friends, and Honors

During his lifetime Ernesto Lecuona was surrounded by friends and fans wherever he went. A warm, kind, and affectionate man, he was always on the lookout for the well being of those he knew and loved, and they, in return, showered him with respect and admiration. He befriended the wealthy and the poor, always finding gentle words for all who came in contact with him (Grenet, 1979). With tears in their eyes, friends and colleagues lovingly remember el maestro, who furthered their careers but, most of all, was a trustworthy friend.

Lecuona creates a legion of singers that adore him, but it is not easy to maintain harmony in this great family. Lecuona achieves it, always affectionate, always patient, year after year, dedicating to each singer the next romanza, the next song, making them feel that it was especially for them. (Ayala, 1981, p.136, trans. Gloria Jacobson)

During his serious illness in Madrid, Cuba mourned and prayed for his recovery. His sister Ernestina was accosted by visitors and phone calls of known and unknown friends who wanted to know how Lecuona's recovery was progressing. Miguel de Grandy, who was with Lecuona in Madrid at that time recalls:

I was playing at the theater two blocks away from Lecuona's flat. Every hour I would pay someone to go and find out how the maestro was doing. Our worry was beyond words. (de Grandy, 1979)

Later on, when a man named Ricardo Lecuona was killed in a Colombian airplane accident, radio stations all over Central and South America went off the air for a silent minute of mourning, under the mistaken impression that it was Ernesto who had been killed. Like Mark Twain reading his own obituary, Lecuona said, "The news of my death has been somewhat exaggerated" (Ramírez, n.d., p. 87).



Following Lecuona's death, Spain proclaimed days of mourning for the composer who had sung the glories of that land, and many city and town streets were named after him (Sperry, 1973). Cuba honored Lecuona with the Gran Cruz de (Great Cross of) Carlos Manuel de Céspedes; the municipality of Havana with the Medalla de (Medal of) la Habana; and the municipality of Guanabacoa with the title "Hijo Eminente" (Eminent Son).

There stands in Miami, Florida, in Crandon Park, an impressive marble and bronze monument, erected in memory of the composer. It was completed in 1968, through the generous contributions of Lecuona's friends in exile.

At the official ceremonies of the day, April 21 was designated hereafter as Ernesto Lecuona Day each year by the mayor and his official family. This signal honor was never before bestowed on any composer from a foreign country. (Sperry, 1973, p. 3)

At the small ceremony which took place at the time, friends and colleagues spoke of the maestro in these words, reported by Rosell (n.d., p. 27), translated by Gloria Jacobson), which summarize the feelings of those who knew him:

And that world of God, where your music, hugging the Cuban flag, brought joy to its people, that world, maestro, will remember you till eternity. (Osvaldo Farrés)

Lecuona, contrary to the main character in his popular danza, did not 'go never to return,' because his memory lives and will continue to live in us, while his music, rhythmic expression of our Cuba, will continue to be heard under all the skies of the world." (Carlitos Robreño)

And that is probably the greatest honor that Lecuona has ever received. His music continues to be played everywhere the Cuban spirit lives, and everywhere his songs have touched. And even in those places where the name Lecuona is unknown, one can hear the strains of his many popular works, being sung in the native language, by persons of all creeds and backgrounds. Lecuona's music has been limited by no race, people, or national boundaries.

CHAPTER IV  
SONGS

Introduction

Lecuona was a tireless songwriter, composing more than 200 songs, spanning his entire career. It was through the wide appeal of many of his songs that Lecuona became known in the international arena. His "Siboney," "Canto Carabalí" (Carabalí Song), "Always in My Heart," and "Noche azul" (Blue Night) are known the world over.

You will seldom meet an American who is unfamiliar with his durable song hits. Some of them are such old familiar tunes that people are always attributing them vaguely to some long dead classical composer. Others are constantly nudging the top numbers on each year's hit parade. (Sargeant, 1947, p. 152)

A number of his songs were, at the outset, written for his zarzuelas and stage works; but their popularity was so great that they became independent entities, completely disassociated from the original context. A few examples are "Canto Carabalí" and "Siboney." Other songs have been created from many of the composer's popular piano music, such as "Malagueña" ("At the Crossroads"), "Andalucía" ("The Breeze and I"), and "Para Vigo me voy" ("Say Sí Sí"). These songs will not be dealt with in the present chapter, but in the one covering Lecuona's piano music. This chapter will look exclusively at original songs and those that have been extracted from his zarzuelas and stage works, where such works are not available for study.

### Characteristics of Songs

Most of Lecuona's songs may be classified in the several genres characteristic of Cuban songs. We find boleros, criollas, danzas, canciones, and pregones. There are also berceuses and caprices. In this paper, the works will be studied under their particular categories, with a brief prior discussion of the texts, melodies, and accompaniment.

#### The Texts

As stated in the previous chapter, Ernesto Lecuona was a poetry aficionado, well-read and familiar with the poets of the day. Many of the texts are verses by well-known poets, enhancing the appealing melodies. As Pedro Machado Castro, music critic, writes:

His Cuban songs form an unending rosary of beautiful melodies, crowned with literary texts, admirable ones, which result in great balance between the greatness of the music and the inspiration of the verses in such cases. (Ramírez, n.d., p. 195)

Among the many poets whose words Lecuona set to music are Gustavo S. Galarraga (librettist for most of his zarzuelas, to be discussed later in more depth), Campoamor, José Angel Buesa, Jacinto Benavente, Heine, Rosario Sensores, Mary Morandeyra, and Blanco Fombona. Following are a few examples of those poems. They have been translated into English by this writer, but it should be understood that they are only literal translations. To appreciate the value of the texts, one must make the effort to read them in the original version.

#### "Hastío"

Ya todo lo he vivido  
Y sólo siento ansias  
De que termine la jornada.  
Para sentir ya no me queda nada,  
Todo lo devoró mi pensamiento.  
Mi corazón, fogoso y turbulento  
Es hoy hoguera exhausta y apagada,  
Y mi voz, melancólica y cansada  
Sólo exhala las preces  
del momento.

#### "Boredom"

I have lived everything  
And only eagerness I feel  
For the journey to end  
I have nothing left to feel with,  
My thoughts have devoured all.  
My fiery and turbulent heart  
Is today an exhausted fire,  
And my voice, melancholic and tired,  
Only exhales the prayers of the  
moment.

No hay un camino que mi afán  
encienda  
Porque sé que después  
de cada senda  
Se oculta el desencanto.  
Y sólo espera mi fatigado  
corazón de niño  
La mano fervorosa de un cariño,  
Que me cierre los ojos  
cuando muera.  
(words by Galarraga)

There is no road that will wake my  
enthusiasm,  
For I know that, beyond each trail,  
Hides disenchantment.  
And my tired, childish heart only  
awaits  
The warm hand of a love,  
That will close my eyes upon death.

And this beauty by Campoamor:

"Nunca te perdonaré"

Ya que éste mundo abandono  
Antes de dar cuenta a Diós,  
Aquí para entre los dos,  
Mi confesión te diré:  
Con todo el alma perdono,  
Hasta los que siempre he odiado.  
¿Y a tí que tanto te he amado!  
Nunca te perdonaré.

"I Will Never Forgive You"

Given that this world I abandon,  
Before settling with God,  
Here, with just the two of us,  
I my confession will tell you:  
With all my soul I forgive,  
Even those I have always hated.  
And you, whom I have loved so much!  
You I will never forgive.

And, by Mary Morandeyra:

"Yo compadezco"

Yo compadezco los corazones  
Que no quisieron nunca soñar.  
Arpas de mármol, liras inertes,  
Que no supieron vibrar jamás.  
Yo compadezco los corazones  
Que no quisieron nunca llorar,  
Los que vivieron anestesiados  
Por los placeres y la maldad,  
Los que murieron sin recordar.  
Yo compadezco los corazones  
Que no quisieron amar jamás

"I Pity"

I pity those hearts  
That never wanted to dream.  
Marble harps, inert lyres,  
That never knew how to vibrate.  
I pity those hearts  
That never wanted to cry,  
The ones who lived anaesthetized  
By the pleasures and the wickedness,  
Those that died without memories.  
I pity those hearts  
That never wanted to love.

We find, amid Lecuona's output, two collections of works for piano and voice. One of the collections sets to music the Versos sencillos (Simple Verses) of the Cuban poet-revolutionary José Martí. It is made up of eight poems, including the famous "Una rosa blanca" (A White Rose). The other collection is based on the poems of Juana de Ibarbourou and includes the well-known children's song and lullaby, "La Señora luna" (Lady Moon).

## "La Señora Luna"

La señora Luna  
 Le pidió al naranjo  
 Un vestido verde  
 Y un vestido blanco.  
 La señora Luna  
 Se quiere casar  
 Con un pajecito  
 De la casa real  
 Duérmete Natacha  
 E irás a la boda  
 Peinada de moño  
 Y en traje de cola

## "Lady Moon"

Lady Moon  
 Asked the orange tree  
 For a green dress  
 And a white dress.  
 Lady Moon  
 Wants to marry  
 A little page boy  
 From the royal house.  
 Sleep, Natasha  
 And you'll go to the wedding,  
 Your hair combed high  
 And with a long-trail dress.

Lecuona himself was a fine poet and he set many of his own verses to music. His inspiration derived mainly from rivers, birds, flowers, cities, and geographical regions. Consequently we find songs titled "Pheasant," "Peacock," "Chrysanthemum," "Gardenia," "Madrigal," "Costa Rica," and "Valencia mora." And then there are his love songs, some of which have become standards in the Spanish language repertoire, such as his "Noche azul."

Melodies

Lecuona's melodic gift was probably unparalleled, as far as Cuban composers go. He produced some of the most attractive combinations of notes written before or after his time. It is quite difficult to form generalizations about the melodies, given that they were all so unique and individual in their character. But it is safe to make a few statements about them.

For the most part, Lecuona's melodies are within the reach of any fine singer, although he tends to favor the higher registers, and some parts are actually quite demanding. Nevertheless, we find melodies written for all vocal ranges.

For example, the very singable "Por eso te quiero," shown in Figure 1, achieves its beauty with a series of rather close intervals within the range of a ninth.

In other songs, such as "Aguinaldos blancos" (White Aguinaldo Flower), quoted in Figures 2, 3, and 4, the range spreads out to one and a half octaves. It is a work full of charm and elegance.

The composer's melodies are generally melodic. A good example is his famous "Noche azul" (Figure 5).

There are a few exceptions, however, among which is the one appearing in Figure 6, "Lamento africano" (African Lament).

#### Accompaniment

Lecuona's songs were all written with piano accompaniment. Since the accompaniments were usually played by himself or his sister Ernestina, an excellent musician, the composer felt comfortable writing quite demanding parts. The obvious disadvantage today is the difficulty in finding two able performers to carry out the songs successfully.

The selection in Figure 7 illustrates the point.

Note in the previous example the octave passages which also appear in "Canción del amor triste" (Song of Sad Love) towards the end (Figure 8) and in the last six measures (Figure 9).

Added difficulties in the same song are the sudden dynamic contrasts, which range from *pp* to *fff*, as well as continuous changes in time and key signatures.

"Balada de amor" (Love Ballad), appearing in Figure 10, is another good example of Lecuona's piano writing. Within the space of a few measures there is a wide range of dynamics.

Te quis - ro por tu ca - ra de ra - sa  
I love you because you're like a flow - er,

Te quis - ro por tus o - jos di - vi - nos Te  
I love you because your eyes are charm - ing,

quis - ro porque se que llor - as - te en mi di - as de ju - ven - tis  
love you because I know you are cry - ing for me dur - ing the blue - days

de triste so - le - dad Te  
and this is my ly - ments I

Figure 1. Lecuona, "Por eso te quiero," Measures 4-20



En-tre-a-gui-ñal - dos — co - lor de nie - ve —  
 — ai - a de la - bios de su ga - lan — tier - ras pa -  
 — la - bras — u - ñeal - ba ni - ña — en u - na car —  
 — de de na - u - daa —

Figure 2. Lecuona, "Aguinaldos blancos," Measures 1-16



A musical score for a vocal line, measures 81-87. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a common time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with various dynamics and articulations. The lyrics are written below the staff: "los a - gui - nal - dos - ve - re - cer".

los a - gui - nal - dos - ve re - cer

Figure 4. Lecuona, "Aguinaldos blancos," Measures 81-87

No- che-a-zul que es mi al- ma re-lla.  
 je la pa- sión que so- ña- ba- ba-ca-ri- cías  
 vuel- ve de mas te a dar pas a mi co- re- súa ¿No ves que  
 mas- ro de de- lar?

Figure 5. Lecuona, "Noche azul," Measures 3-18

Canto (*p*)

A -fri - ca - na soy mo - re - na es mi faz yen mi

san - grea - dien - te va el vol - can — A - fri - ca - na soy yo soy lu - cu - mi y un yu -

go dees - cla va pesa en mi — en mi co - ra - zon la - ta - na pa - sión pa - sión

que ja - mas pa - ra mi se - rá yen mi cru - el pe - sar. mi con sue - lo es — so - lo

zar en un can - tar mi do - lor

The musical score consists of five systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The first system is labeled 'Canto (p)'. The lyrics are: 'A -fri - ca - na soy mo - re - na es mi faz yen mi'. The second system continues with 'san - grea - dien - te va el vol - can — A - fri - ca - na soy yo soy lu - cu - mi y un yu -'. The third system has 'go dees - cla va pesa en mi — en mi co - ra - zon la - ta - na pa - sión pa - sión'. The fourth system has 'que ja - mas pa - ra mi se - rá yen mi cru - el pe - sar. mi con sue - lo es — so - lo'. The fifth system has 'zar en un can - tar mi do - lor'. The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings: *mf*, *cresc.*, *cresc.*, *p*, and *rit.* at the end.

Figure 6. Lecuona, "Lamento africano," Measures 6-21

MODERATO.  
 En no - ches de lu - na yo so - ñe con - ti - go que - ras ta do ma - ñor lu - ma - ña - que - do gra - ba - da en mi - ñen mi cruel des - per - tar - me ha - llá - so - lo con mi do - lor - En

Figure 7. Lecuona, "En noches de luna," Measures 1-10

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Canción del amor triste" by Lecuona, specifically measures 60-70. The score is presented in two systems. The first system consists of a vocal line on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The piano accompaniment features a complex, rhythmic texture with many beamed notes and slurs, and is marked with a forte dynamic (*ff*). The second system includes the same piano accompaniment and a vocal line with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are "La a-mi-co vi-do-ro no que-ri-a". The vocal line includes dynamic markings such as *ff*, *fff*, and *rit...*, along with articulation like accents and slurs. The piano accompaniment in the second system also includes dynamic markings like *fff* and *rit...*, and features a triplet of notes marked with a "3" and "(len)".

Figure 8. Lecuona, "Canción del amor triste," Measures 60-70

Handwritten musical score for "Canción del amor triste" by Lecuona, measures 84-90. The score is written on two systems of staves. The top system shows a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics "va-ya me po-drás lle-uar" and "va-ya, a dan-da yo". The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings like "ff" and "f" and performance instructions like "(ruba la)". The bottom system continues the piano accompaniment with "rall." and "pesante" markings.

Figure 9. Lecuona, "Canción del amor triste," Measures 84-90







MODERATO: *p*

En-tre-a-gui-pal-dos — co-lor de nie-ve —

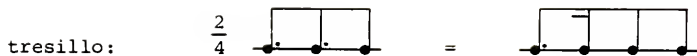
— oi-a de la-bios de su ga-lan — tier-nas pa-

- la - bras — u-na-al-ba ni-ña — en u-na car-

- de de na-vi-dad —

The musical score is presented in four systems. Each system includes a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a steady accompaniment of chords in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. The lyrics are: "En-tre-a-gui-pal-dos — co-lor de nie-ve —", "— oi-a de la-bios de su ga-lan — tier-nas pa-", "- la - bras — u-na-al-ba ni-ña — en u-na car-", and "- de de na-vi-dad —".

Figure 11. Lecuona, "Aguinaldos blancos," Measures 1-17



The boleros found in Lecuona's output, as well as in many Latin American dances, made use of the following pattern, among the others:



which is another way of writing the cinquillo, and




Notwithstanding the rhythmic pattern, what probably characterizes a bolero more than anything else is its spirit or mood.

The bolero . . . is always lyrical, playful, and a merriment which endeavors to send primordial bubbles through it. When a trace of truth mars its perennial smile, this smile suddenly emerges again with greater strength. (Grenet, 1937, p. 39)

Some of Lecuona's boleros represent classic examples of the form. Among them are "Se fué," "Aquella tarde," "Por un beso de tu boca," and the second section of the popular "Como arrullo de palmas."

In "Por un beso de tu boca" (For a Kiss from Your Lips) the two patterns described above are found interchanged throughout the song. (Figure 12) The same is the case in the typical bolero, "Se fué" (She Left), in Figure 13.

In the well-known "Como arruyo de palmas" (Like the Whispers of Palm Trees), Lecuona strictly adheres to the  pattern (Figure 14).

*Tro de Bolero*

TRAO

Yo sa-bí-e que no i-ba a ver-le  
 pues-le fui-to sia de car-ma-a-dios  
 y may so-lo me que-de-do  
 la do y lo-de la no-che se-  
 ñe cas-tu-a-mar. yo sa

Figure 12. Lecuona, "Por un beso de tu boca," Measures 1-21

*TPO. DE BOLERO:*

*PIANO*

*Sea la luz*

*de sus o-jos... es cru-el... mas lar-*

*mea-to... Das-le es-loy...*

Figure 13. Lecuona, "Se fué," Measures 1-17

*Bolero (lento)*

mor... E res tú la mu... un que reina en mi cora zón

dulce bien que soñó mi pa... na de ilusión... E. res

tu flor carrial de mi por diti i de al... tra que no yher. mo. sa cual

mu. sa su ti. de ca. le. da. tie. ma. tro. bi. cal Tu mi.

Figure 14. Lecuona, "Como arroyo de palmas," Measures 20-37

### Criollas

Another group of Lecuona's songs falls into the category of criollas, short for canción criolla (creole song). Derived from the canto de clave, which was in turn a black creation, the criolla is a genre which shows the influence of both the Spanish melody and the African rhythm. Emilio Grenet provides a clear description of the form of the criolla:

It consists of a brief introduction and two parts generally of sixteen measures each in which the phrases attain two or four measures. The extension of each part is not, however, limited to a determined number of measures, nor is its modal aspect limited. The measure is six-eight, and the air is slow and cantable. (Grenet, 1937, p. 41)

The rhythmically interesting feature of the criolla is the hemiola effect created by the juxtaposition of six-eight figures in the melody against the three-four in the accompaniment. Some of Lecuona's songs in this form are "Bajo el claro de la luna" (Under the Light of the Moon), quoted in Figure 15, "Nada tengo de tí" (I Have Nothing from You), and "Hastío" (Boredom).

The criolla often appears in combination with other genres, particularly the bolero. The criolla appears in the first part. Lecuona's "Aquella tarde" is a fine example of the so-called "criolla-bolero." Figure 16 is a section of the criolla part.

"Como arrullo de palmas," discussed earlier as an example of the boleros, also fits into the category of "criolla-bolero." One of the reasons the criollas are paired with the boleros is, according to Grenet, "to attenuate the harshness of its (the bolero's) rhythmical yoke" (Grenet, 1939, p. 26).



Voz

El jar - din, be - jines cla - ro de la lu - na -

- lua - sa - ma - dael vi - trai de la ra - ton - da El sa -

uz pro - yec - tan - do su re - don - da cu - pu - la en el cris - tal

Figure 15. Lecuona, "Bajo el claro de la luna," Measures 7-19

*Moderato*

*Cono* *yo que ro que tu*

yo que ro que tu me que ras y e res tan

y e res tan cruel

cruel que me des pre cias Si supieras tú lo

mu cho que ho ra do desde aquella tar de an que te

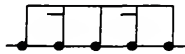
vi Yo que ro que

*p*

Figure 16. Lecuona, "Aquella tarde," Measures 1-20

### Danzas

Danzas are yet another category in Lecuona's song output. These, which originally developed from the contradanza and were later superseded by the danzón, are in two-part form. The introduction is made up of eight measures, repeated to make a total of sixteen. The second part is usually thirty-two measures. It is in two-four time and makes frequent use of the cinquillo rhythmic pattern:



The larger instrumental form will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on piano music. Suffice it to say that some examples of the composer's danzas for voice and piano are "Muñequita," "Andar," and "Aquí está."

### Canciones

Another group is labeled simply canciones (songs), and the works comprised are extremely varied in character. They are all, nonetheless, romantic, with a touch of dramaticism, which sets them apart from the other genres. The canciones have not achieved a particular characteristic form, admits Grenet.

It uses the most varied forms for its expression, employing rhythmic measures of three-four, six-eight, quadruple, or two-four time. This expression is tender, plaintive, melancholy, sentimental, romantic, and it is developed in the most measured harmonic environment. There are at times agreeable modulative surprises aided by a slow and dramatic style which follows classical technique in expression. (Grenet, 1939, p. 27)

"Noche azul" is probably one of Lecuona's best-known canciones.

Also popular are "Señor jardinero" (Mr. Gardener), "Te quiero morena" (I Love You, Brunette), and "Corazón: no pidas más" (Heart: Don't Ask for More).

### Pregones

The pregón is probably the most characteristic Cuban genre. It is the name given to the chant of the common street vendor or peddler, while he announces the goods and quality of the goods for sale. "The intonation of the voice announcing an article acquires a clear profile, producing real musical periods" (Grenet, 1939, p.41) Cuban musicians have always been inspired by pregones, and some of the Island's most famous and loved songs fall in this category. "El manisero" (The Peanut Vendor) by Moisés Simons has toured the world.

Lecuona also felt drawn to the pregones of the Cuban vendors and adapted them to music. He created some of the most picturesque and at the same time nostalgic views of the common peddler on the streets of the Island. Ayala asks concerning Lecuona's pregones, "How could anyone purify, sophisticate, and elegantly dress the popular music without losing its character?" (Ayala, 1981, p. 138).

Four of his best-known pregones are in a collection which includes "El pirulero" (The Candy Vendor), "El frutero" (The Fruit Vendor), "El dulcero" (The Pastry Vendor), and "El pulpero" (The Fruit-Pulp Vendor).

The texts of the pregones are usually humorous and piquant. It must be remembered that the peddler's song was aimed at the housewives, who were home alone during the day. Following is the text of "El frutero," by Sánchez-Galarraga, translated by this author.

#### El frutero

Yo llevo piñas sabrosas  
Y con doraditas conchitas.  
Esas piñas yo las llevo  
Para las niñas bonitas  
También llevo calabaza  
Con otras frutas mezcla'os  
Esas no son para las niñas;  
Son pa' sus enamora'os

#### The Fruit Vendor

I carry delicious pineapples  
With golden skins.  
Those pineapples I carry  
For pretty girls.  
I also carry pumpkin  
Mixed in with other fruits.  
Those are not for the girls  
But for their lovers.

También yo llevo naranjas,  
 Y argunas(sic) las llevo secas.  
 Esas son para las viejas,  
 Para las viejas cluecas.  
 Caserita, sal que tengo  
 Muchas frutas en sasón.  
 Soy el frutero que llevo  
 Mamoncillo y rico anón.  
 Soy frutero, caserita sal.

Medio tablero doy por un real,  
 Y a tí caserita te lo daré

Si te sonríes como yo sé.  
 Ya se vá, sí señor,  
 El frutero ya se vá.  
 Caserita pronto sal  
 Si le quieres tú comprar.  
 Que llevo los mamoncillo y el  
 canitel,

Y llevo también las naranjas  
 de la China ó del Cajel  
 Y el rico mamey.  
 Y llevo también anón  
 Tan dulce por su sabor.  
 Ay casera sal  
 Que ya el frutero se vá.  
 Ay, que sí señor,  
 Que ya yo me voy  
 Si tú no me quieres  
 Comprarme na'.

I also carry oranges,  
 And some I carry dry.  
 These are for the old ladies,  
 For the flirting old ladies.  
 Little housewife, come out for I have  
 Many fruits in season.  
 I'm the fruit vendor who sells  
Mamoncillo and tasty anón.  
 I'm the fruit vendor, little  
 housewife; come out.

Half a flat I sell for a dime,  
 And to you, little housewife, I'll  
 give it

If you smile, as I know you do.  
 He's leaving, yes sir,  
 The fruit vendor's leaving.  
 Little housewife, come out soon  
 If you want to buy from him.  
 I carry mamoncillo and canitel

And also oranges I carry  
 From China or from Cajel,  
 And the tasty mamey.  
 And I also carry anón  
 Tasting so very sweet.  
 Ay, housewife, come out  
 For the fruit vendor is leaving.  
 Ay, yes sir,  
 I'm already leaving  
 If you don't want  
 To buy anything from me.

Musically the pregón is in two-four and is characterized by a rapid progression of, most likely, eighth or sixteenth notes. This parallels the fast delivery of words of the peddlers. The note range is usually narrow with intervals no greater than a fourth. With many repeated notes, they are accurate approximations of the chant-like intonations of the street vendors (Figure 17). The accompaniment, as seen in that example, is usually unobtrusive, although sometimes one can find the bolero rhythm in the bass, as is the case in "El frutero" (Figure 18).

Many of these pregones, it must be said, have been standardized to the point that they are passed on from generation to generation without suffering any major changes.

*Tula*

Lle-vo ca-la-ba-sas cano-las bru-las pes-clas e-sas no sap pa-las vi-jas sap pa-sus e-ya i-po-re-as tu-que

*ff*

yo lle-vo pa-ran-jas yer-bu-vas las lle-vo se-cas li-sas sap pa-ra las vie-jas pa-ra

las vie-jas clu-e-cas. Ca-se re-la sal-ga lan-go que pas-tru-las en sa-sap-ro-yel frute-ro qe lle-va i-po-re-as

*cano*

ci-lay re-cu-a-pan Ca-se

Figure 17. Lecuona, "El frutero," Measures 17-32

*Tula*

Yo lle-vo pi-ñas sa-bro-sas y cap-do-ra-das cap-ci-lás li-sas

*p*

pi-ñas yo las lle-vo pa-ra las ni-ñas bo-ni-tas. Tam-bien

*Cara*

lle-vo ca-la-ba-ras cano-bras fru-tas mer-ca-las e-sas pa-saj pa-las ni-ñas son pa-sus e-je-je-je-je Tam-bien

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for the piece "El frutero" by Lecuona, measures 4-16. The score is written in 2/4 time and consists of three systems. Each system includes a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The lyrics are in Spanish and describe a fruit vendor's wares. The first system starts with the word "Tula" above the vocal line. The second system has a piano dynamic marking "p". The third system has a "Cara" marking above the vocal line. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand.

Figure 18. Lecuona, "El frutero," Measures 4-16

### Summary

Lecuona's song output may be summarized with one phrase: unmistakably Cuban. He did write a few songs labeled "berceuse," "impromptu," and "caprice," definitely inspired by the Romantic movement taking place abroad. However, there are so few such examples that a detailed discussion is immaterial to the task at hand. The overwhelming majority of his compositions for voice were rooted in and inspired by the Cuban land and its people.

What makes Lecuona's songs so unmistakably Cuban? Of foremost musical significance is his use of native rhythms and forms, which he applies accurately and tastefully. But more important to the man on the street is that inherent Cuban character and flavor that permeates his output.

In Lecuona, Cubanism is a deep current that flows like an emotional sap throughout his work. One of his songs, the least rhythmic, which unfolds itself without a sensual cadence or suggestion of syncopation is indefinably Creole. It is enough to hear it, in any part of the world, to identify its origin. A work of Lecuona, announcing its simple song without the complementary left hand, expresses the entire tropics. No one would mistake its affiliation or derivation. (Rosello, 1935, p. 2, trans. Gloria Jacobson)

Lecuona's songs are a good illustration of the composer's romantic nature. He searched for texts that were filled with human emotions and feelings. Banal subjects had no place in his output. Further evidence of romanticism is the extreme dynamic markings and tempo changes that invariably appear throughout the songs.

It may be safely stated that, although Lecuona's songs are not landmarks in the history of the genre, their worldwide appeal rests on the composer's ability to use the old, the traditional, the loved, to create new and fresh means of expression. He gave a face lift to the time-honored musical forms.



CHAPTER V  
PIANO MUSIC

Introduction

Lecuona's music for piano constitutes the most exciting, varied, and representative genre of his entire output. Because of its importance, an attempt must be made to understand those factors which contributed towards its form and character as we know it today.

Lecuona was an accomplished pianist from his earliest years. His future in the concert world was practically assured when he decided to devote himself to the performance of his own works. This chapter seems the ideal place to relate the reasons for the composer's choice, which was to influence the quality of his output so greatly.

The Afro-Cuban influence on Lecuona's music has been pointed out repeatedly. It permeated almost every work, becoming such an inherent part of the composer's music to the point of being considered one and the same. Before embarking on the analysis of the literature, it is therefore appropriate to expound briefly in this chapter on the meaning of the term and its specific place in the music of Cuba.

Lecuona as Composer and Performer of his Own Works

Long before Lecuona's transition to composer and performer of his own music, he was a serious interpreter of the classic repertoire. The reviews of the times and the observations made by the established pianists of the epoch attest to the fact that he was well on his way to fame as a performer. Hubert de Blanck admitted, as early as 1913, ". . . he's a player of extraordinary brilliancy, a perfect temperament,

and of great value" (Ramírez, n.d., p. 13). Emilio Agramonte was even more effusive in his praise.

I have heard all the great pianists from Liszt to Thalberg. Lecuona is a complete artist. He has temperament, easy and nimble fingers. A surprising mechanism and a left hand similar to Rubenstein and Lavine (sic). His touch is pure and clean like that of Joseph Hoffman. (Ramírez, n.d., p. 13)

It may be recalled that the maestro's graduating piece at the Conservatory was Schumann's A Minor Concerto. Before, and also long after that recital, Lecuona would primarily select works from the classical repertoire to form his numerous programs. Only at the end of the performance would he add one or two of his own compositions for the audiences to hear.

His future, then, seemed paved for success as a pianist of world renown.

He could have appeared in all the world's stages, and today his name would be among the universe's performers, but he was too much of a composer and, most of all, too much of a Cuban for that. (Ayala, 1981, p. 136, trans. Gloria Jacobson)

Ayala is completely correct in his observation. Lecuona was too much of a composer and a Cuban. The maestro certainly did not reject the idea of becoming a well-known performer; but he wanted to use his pianistic ability to do what he enjoyed most. His dream was to become an interpreter of his own works, which were indeed far from the classical repertoire in which he had been brought up. Lecuona recalled:

I had the ambition of being unique, my own. To be Lecuona: theater, danzas, songs, and piano of Lecuona. To be it in my country, and in Spain, Argentina, Norway, China, Japan, Australia, Russia, . . . . (Ramírez, n.d., p. 17)

What were the reasons for the road finally taken, for the abandonment of the virtuoso route, which had proved to be so easy and accessible to Lecuona?

First, Lecuona felt great admiration, almost to the point of infatuation, for the American Louis Gottschalk. Interesting parallels may be drawn between the early musical genius and rise to fame of both composers. Lecuona was particularly interested in Gottschalk's music, in his use of Afro-Caribbean rhythms, Creole melodies, and virtuoso passagework. He also admired the composer's full dedication to the performance of his own works. Gottschalk had been mentioned in the same breath as Liszt and Thalberg, just as Lecuona had been later. And Gottschalk had relinquished the call to fame and followed his intuition. This was probably the first push Lecuona received, however indirectly, towards his goal.

Second, the Cuban environment was very limited in terms of opportunities to develop the musical potential of a pianist trained in the classical arena. Unfortunately, there were no societies or organizations that would provide scholarships for study abroad of talented students. Lecuona did not have the means to take his musical education upon himself.

The third problem, competition and financial difficulties, was corroborated by Lecuona.

I was an artist dedicated seriously to the "serious" piano literature, classic and modern. . . . But I realized that my fight to universalize myself as a strict piano concertizer was going to be terrible, my name not ending in "wsky" or in another strange combination of letters. I did not have fortune or revenues, or anything like that to live on, except my inspiration and my hands of a pianist. (Ramírez, n.d., p. 16)

Fourth, Lecuona liked applause and, from the very start, "I noticed that even in concert halls, when Lecuona interpreted Lecuona, the public, equally in Havana, Madrid, or Paris, vibrated with enthusiasm" (Ramírez, n.d, p. 16).

Although even up to 1932 the composer added classical works to his repertoire, the trend towards popular music had already been established. It may be recalled that while still eleven, the young pianist accompanied singers of the day in segments from zarzuelas and other popular music. It was at that time that he began to manifest a promising melodic talent, very popular and very Cuban. The various works of his own that he included at the end of recitals were received with frenetic enthusiasm, not only because of their brilliant execution but because of the Cubanism they represented.

The decisive break came in 1932. He was then touring Spain, with the soprano María Fantoli, presenting concerts of his own works for piano and voice. The audiences loved it, and the critics gave glowing reviews. Lecuona decided it was the time to make his definitive move.

Notwithstanding his success from then on, the maestro never refused to play from the classical repertoire when asked to.

This giant of music was so humble that he never resented a suggestion at a private gathering that he play Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and his response was invariably gracious and cooperative. He would play any composer's piece without a tinge of feeling that his should have preference. Without fail, his admirers and friends would insist that he cap the evening's entertainment with his own tunes. (Sperry, 1973, p. 2)

Although the definitive transition came rather late in the composer's career, Lecuona was elated. What he had always dreamed had finally become reality: Lecuona was interpreting Lecuona.

#### Afro-Cubanism

The general feelings of the white community in the first years of the Republic were reflected in hostile observations made by musicologists of the time concerning the presence of black rhythms in Cuban

music. Blacks had already been granted their freedom by then. But the same country which was trying to parallel the cultural currents of the time showed little, if any respect for its black population. Indeed, in many ways blacks were severely repressed, as was the case with their religious celebrations and other cultural expressions.

Up to that time, the blacks in the Island were conserving a poetic and musical tradition which, unknown to them, would later be analyzed and scrutinized by historians and musicologists everywhere. The purity of many of those traditions was questionable. The freed slaves in the nineteenth century had, of their own will, rapidly acculturated into the Cuban-Spanish way of life. Many of these blacks would deal exclusively with the music of the whites and would refuse to play the role of blacks in the stage works of the time. But it was difficult to relinquish those enculturated rhythms that were so much a part of their heritage.

At the same time, it must not be forgotten, ships kept unloading black laborers, fresh from the African homelands. Those blacks, in contrast to their freed counterparts, had little if any contact with the outside world. To some, the boundaries of their master's farm would be as far as they would ever go. Their work was made less arduous by the singing of their traditional songs, which were passed on to the younger generation. Furthermore, the blacks were frequently required to dance their dances and sing their songs for the white overlords, who believed it to be good for their health. Most of the songs and dances were religious in nature.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century to its end, an Afro-Cuban secular music developed. It came to the attention of the white population through the public performances given by lower class benefit

societies. Largely Negro, although not exclusively, these societies appeared in public, dancing, singing, and drumming, on such feast days as Epiphany. They would wear elaborate masks and costumes at these performances.

The sound and rhythms of the African drum fascinated the white population and, at the end of the century,

Spanish melodies were superimposed on the secular Afro-Cuban music, and the guitar was added to the drums, producing, in the words of Ortiz, 'love affairs of the Spanish guitar with the African drum.' The dances and rhythms that resulted from this mingling -- the rumba, conga, son, and bolero -- spread to much of the world. (McGaffy, Wyatt, and Barnett, 1962, p. 223)

As stated before, though, whites in early twentieth-century Cuba were still not ready to accept the contributions of the blacks, and the Afro-Cuban movement was violently received. But it did not take long for the fever to cool down. After all, that was the time when Stravinsky, in his revolutionary Rite of Spring, was making use of a barrage of complex and interesting rhythms. Milhaud had already been influenced by the Brazilian sambas, and the Mexican painter Diego Rivera y de Orozco had impressed Cuban intellectuals with the possibility of tapping their local creole cultural resources. And suddenly, all eyes turned to the Negro.

That is the way that the Afro-Cuban tendency was born, that for more than ten years would feed poems, novels, folkloric, and sociological studies. In many cases, the extent was to the superficial and peripheral, to the 'negro under the sun-intoxicated palm trees,' but that constituted a necessary step to the better understanding of certain poetic, musical, ethnic, and social factors that had contributed to giving a unique character to the creole. (Carpentier, 1946, p. 236, trans. Gloria Jacobson)

### Danzas

Best known in Lecuona's piano repertoire are his three sets of danzas: Afro-Cubanas, Cubanas, and A la antigua ("Nineteenth-Century Cuban Dances"). As Grenet correctly states, "His production in this genre constitutes the most interesting manifestation of this highly popular composer" (Grenet, 1939, p. 31).

The ballroom danza as a form developed from the contradanza, as described earlier. The contradanza (from the English "country dance") was imported to Cuba by the French in the eighteenth century. It belonged to the typical square dances where all the couples in the ballroom collaborated to form different figures.

The danza, however, was danced independently by couples. Its form was two-part, the second of which was a sharp contrast in character to the first. In two-four time, it was a rapid dance, full of joy and gaiety. It is probably the tempo, unsuited to the warm tropical climate, that caused the danza to be replaced eventually by the danzón, in a slower rhythm.

The danza disappeared completely. It was instead stylized and placed in concert halls, with little remaining of its original relationship to the dance. Lecuona was one of a few composers to produce in this new form.

Ernesto Lecuona has enriched the genre with his abundant production and has redeemed it definitely from the dance steps. His control of piano technique makes him dally with delicious sonorities of a realism which is at times surprising and in which the idea bubbles in the impenetrability of a rhythm which is uncontrollable, dominating, and obsessing. (Grenet, 1939, p. 31)

Danzas Afro-Cubanas

1. "La conga de medianoche"
2. "Danza negra"
3. "Y la negra bailaba"
4. "Danza de los Nañigos"
5. "Danza Lucumí"
6. "La comparsa"

The obsessing rhythm of which Grenet speaks is best exemplified in "La comparsa." A comparsa is a traditional procession which takes place yearly during the Carnival season in Cuba. Thousands of Negroes and mulattos dance down the streets, singing their exotic melodies to the accompaniment of rhythm instruments. Composers have always tried to capture the spirit of these festive times.

In his danza, which Lecuona wrote at the early age of fifteen, the composer carefully depicts the gradual approach of the comparsa. After developing it through all the climactic moments of the second part, the music begins to diminish. The parade is disappearing in the distance, and its last sounds get lost in a melancholy diminuendo. As Ayala writes, "'La comparsa' is music that describes; it is a symphonic poem, probably the most compact one ever written" (Ayala, 1981, p. 138, trans. Gloria Jacobson)

The persistent rhythm of the African drum is heard continuously through the danza, imbuing the work with the liveliness and gaiety typical of the Cuban comparsas (Figure 19). The effect is even more dramatic in the climactic second half, in a new key (Figure 20).

The same rhythmic fervor may be observed in "Danza Lucumí," which, along with "La comparsa" and "Danza negra," captures the Carnival spirit so well. The Lucumís were the Cuban descendants of the Nigerian Yoruba. They brought to Cuba their complex religious beliefs and their drums, which were an integral part of their religious ritual, Santería Lucumí.



Moderato


From the way  
*ppp* *allegro sempre movimento* *pp*

imitation of Tambor (Small Drum) *simile*

Figure 19. Lecuona, "La comparsa," Measures 1-19

The image displays a musical score for piano, consisting of three systems of staves. The first system shows measures 52-54. The right-hand part begins with a dotted line and the number '8' above it, indicating an eighth-note rhythm. The left-hand part starts with a fortissimo (*fff*) dynamic. The second system covers measures 55-58. The right-hand part features a *lucio* marking above the notes. The left-hand part includes dynamics of *dim.*, *f*, and *dim.*. The third system shows measures 59-61, with a *dim.* marking above the notes in the right-hand part.

Figure 20. Lecuona, "La comparsa," Measures 52-61

Figure 21 illustrates a portion of the frantic music. Note the repeated rhythmic pattern in the bass. It is the  bolero rhythm. It is a work of unequalled feverish excitement. The constant and sudden changes in dynamics clearly evoke the soulful expression of the participants.

Another interesting work in the suite is the "Danza de los Nañigos." The Nañigos were members of a cult which maintained its unique religion, worship, customs, and rituals, even after their arrival in Cuba. There was a certain kind of fear and mysticism associated with the Nañigos, which Winthrop Sargeant describes:

Upper class Cubans sometimes frighten their children by telling them the Nañigos will get them if they are not good. The Cuban police keep the Nañigo tribal rituals under surveillance and are ready to pounce the minute there is a change from harmless voodoo to political agitation. Once a year, at Carnival time, the Nañigos come into the open as the big event of the Cuban comparsas....The streets of Havana stream with joyous throngs of fantastically costumed Negroes, prancing along to drumming and chanting that sounds as though it came straight from the heart of Africa. (Sargeant, 1947, p. 151)

In "Danza de los Nañigos," it seems that Lecuona wants to express that yearly moment of elation when the Nañigos can openly sing of themselves. The composition opens with no more than a pp passage of constant hand crossing, shown in Figure 22. It all builds to an almost uncontrollable fff *strepitoso*, achieved by different rapid octave passages in the right hand (Figure 23). The work ends, again in a ppp, probably symbolizing the return of the Nañigos to their secret world.

Lecuona was favored with hands that could easily span a tenth on the keyboard. He exploited them by constantly writing demanding octave passages in the great majority of his works. A case in point appears in Figure 24, the *piu mosso* section in "...Y la negra bailaba" (And the Black Woman Danced).

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Danza Lucumi" by Lecuona, specifically measures 91-102. The score is presented in three systems, each consisting of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system, at the top right, begins with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a tempo marking of *Allegro*. The second system, in the middle, features a *trco* (trill) marking above the treble staff. The third system, at the bottom, continues the musical notation. The score is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, and is marked with numerous accents and slurs. The notation is dense, with many notes and rests, and includes various performance instructions such as *mf*, *Allegro*, and *trco*.

Figure 21. Lecuona, "Danza Lucumi," Measures 91-102

Musical score for "Danza de los Nañigos" by Lecuona, measures 77-100. The score is written for piano in 3/4 time, featuring a complex, rhythmic melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The piece is marked with various dynamics including *ppp*, *f*, *p*, and *diminuendo*.

The score is divided into five systems, each consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef). The first system (measures 77-80) begins with a *ppp* dynamic and a *f* dynamic. The second system (measures 81-84) is marked *diminuendo*. The third system (measures 85-88) also features *diminuendo*. The fourth system (measures 89-92) includes a *p* dynamic and a *rit. s. sotto* marking. The fifth system (measures 93-100) concludes with *ppp* and *dimin.* markings.

Figure 22. Lecuona, "Danza de los Nañigos," Measures 77-100

The musical score is arranged in three systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The music is characterized by dense, rhythmic textures with frequent accents (marked with 'v') and dynamic markings.

- System 1 (Measures 41-44):** The first system begins with a dynamic marking of *cresc.* (crescendo). It features eighth-note patterns in both hands, with accents on many notes. A first ending bracket labeled '8' spans measures 41-44.
- System 2 (Measures 45-48):** The second system continues the rhythmic intensity. It includes dynamic markings of *f* (forte), *f cresc. molto* (forte, very much crescendo), and *ff* (fortissimo). A second ending bracket labeled '8' spans measures 45-48.
- System 3 (Measures 49-55):** The third system concludes the passage with a dynamic marking of *fff strepitoso* (fortissimissimo, very noisy). A third ending bracket labeled '8' spans measures 49-55.

Throughout the score, there are numerous accents and slurs, indicating a highly rhythmic and expressive performance style. The notation includes many beamed eighth notes and sixteenth notes, creating a complex and driving texture.

Figure 23. Lecuona, "Danza de los Nañigos," Measures 41-55

The image displays a musical score for piano, consisting of four systems of music. Each system is written for a grand piano with a treble and bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 2/4. The score is marked with various dynamics and performance instructions:

- System 1:** Starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a complex, rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment.
- System 2:** Features a piano-piano (*pp*) dynamic. The right hand continues with intricate patterns, and the left hand has a more active role with eighth notes.
- System 3:** Includes a *loco* marking above the right hand, indicating a section of rapid, somewhat uncontrolled playing. The right hand has a dense texture of sixteenth notes. The left hand has a *ritard.* (ritardando) marking. The system ends with a *crase* (caesura) symbol.
- System 4:** A shorter system concluding the piece, marked with a *crase* (caesura) symbol.

Figure 24. Lecuona, "Y la negra bailaba," Measures 55-69

Another example, shown in Figure 25, appears in "Danza negra." In the same piece, Figure 26 shows that rhythmic obsession which characterizes most of the compositions in the suite. The repeating pattern appears here in the first and last section.

By far the most challenging of the Afro-Cuban danzas is the "Conga de medianoche" (Midnight Conga). Congas are dances of African origin. "The 'conga,' whose name comes from a large drum, probably of the Congo, is a manifestation of African joy without any preconceived formality" (Grenet, 1939, p. 45).

The dance is in two-four time, with essentially a march rhythm. It is based on a two-measure pattern; the first is symmetrical, but the second is syncopated, the second beat anticipated by a sixteenth note.



The conga is danced on ballrooms and in the street. In a ballroom it is danced by couples or, as is more often the case, in a conga line, wherein participants hold on to the waist or shoulders of the person ahead. The dancers simply march to the beat of the rhythm, marking the syncopation by a kick and a brusque movement of the body. In the street the conga is similarly danced, except that the dancers are often not holding on to one another.

It should be added that, from the time of the Republic, the conga became an instrument of political propaganda. The texts almost always dealt with the defeat or victory of a particular candidate. In writing the "Conga de medianoche," Lecuona probably recalled the noises and popular sones he heard as a child during nights of typical political meetings.



This image displays a page of musical notation for the piece "Danza negra" by Lecuona, specifically measures 55 through 68. The score is presented in three systems, each consisting of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The music is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation is highly rhythmic and complex, featuring numerous sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together. There are many accents and slurs throughout the piece. The first system begins with a dynamic marking of *f* and a hairpin crescendo. The second system includes a dynamic marking of *fz* (forzando) and a hairpin crescendo. The third system starts with a dynamic marking of *f* and a hairpin crescendo, and ends with a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo) and a hairpin crescendo. The notation is dense and intricate, characteristic of Lecuona's style.

Figure 25. Lecuona, "Danza negra," Measures 55-68

Moderato

*p* *bla marcatu*

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 2/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The dynamic is 'p' (piano), and the articulation is 'bla marcatu'. The bass line features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system continues the piece, with the piano introduction in the treble clef. The third system shows the beginning of the piece with a piano introduction.

Figure 26. Lecuona, "Danza negra," Measures 1-10

Lecuona's conga is an extremely interesting piece to analyze. In the first place we do find the continuous conga rhythm throughout (Figure 27). However, in listening to the work we find that it is practically impossible to dance to it. "La conga de medianoche" is a very delicate composition. Its elegance and refined character make it a great listening piece, but out of place on a dance floor. Moreover, it is not at all a singable melody. "La conga" is one of Lecuona's most dissonant works. The opening measures, quoted in Figure 28, give a brief glimpse of the unconventional harmonies.

The dissonances are brought about through the superimposition of major and minor seconds. This is also seen in the climactic B section, "strepitoso e largamente." Figure 29 illustrates the unusual harmony for early twentieth-century Cuban music.

#### Danzas Cubanas

1. "No hables más" (Speak No More)
2. "No puedo contigo" (I Cannot Deal with You)
3. "Ahí viene el chino" (Here Comes the Chinaman)
4. "¿Por qué te vas?" (Why Do You Go?)
5. "Lola está de fiesta" (Lola Is Celebrating)
6. "En tres por cuatro" (In Three-Quarter Time)

This representative set of Cuban dances is next in popularity to the Danzas Afro-Cubanas. Four of the compositions are in the two-four time typical of popular music. "Ahí viene el chino" is in four-four, and "En tres por cuatro," as the title says, is in three-four. They are all in simple ABA form.

Characteristic of the danzas is a repetitive rhythmic pattern in the bass which continues throughout the entire A section of the works.

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Conga de medianoche" by Lecuona, specifically measures 37 through 45. The score is presented in two systems, each consisting of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The first system (measures 37-42) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The right hand features a complex, rhythmic melody with many beamed notes and slurs, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment with chords and eighth notes. The second system (measures 43-45) starts with a *meno forte* dynamic. The right hand continues with intricate melodic patterns, including a sequence of notes marked with fingerings 2, 1, 4, 8, 4, 3, 4, 2, 3, 1. The left hand accompaniment includes chords and eighth notes, with some notes marked with fingerings 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5. The score is enclosed in a rectangular border.

Figure 27. Lecuona, "Conga de medianoche," Measures 37-45

Allegro



*pp poco marcato*

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Conga de medianoche" by Lecuona, measures 1-6. The score is written for piano and is in 3/4 time. The tempo is marked "Allegro" and the dynamics are "pp poco marcato". The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, and the bass staff contains a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. There are fingerings indicated by numbers 1-5 above and below notes. The piece is enclosed in a rectangular box.

Figure 28. Lecuona, "Conga de medianoche," Measures 1-6

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Conga de medianoche" by Lecuona, specifically measures 98 through 110. The score is written for piano and is divided into three systems. The first system begins with the tempo and mood marking "Serpentino e largamente". The music is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or F minor) and a 2/4 time signature. The notation includes complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes, as well as various articulations such as accents and slurs. The piano part is characterized by dense, multi-voiced textures in both the treble and bass staves. The score concludes with a double bar line at the end of the third system.

Figure 29. Lecuona, "Conga de medianoche," Measures 98-110

In "No hables más" we find the pattern , and in "¿Por qué te vas?" it is  (Figure 30). In the B section Lecuona provides the contrast by changing the rhythm pattern which, once again, remains constant throughout the part.

The two best known Danzas Cubanas are "En tres por cuatro" and "Ahí viene el chino." In the former, Lecuona places the accents in the weak beats, creating a syncopated three-four piece full of grace and freshness. The repetitive left hand pattern and the right hand octaves are also illustrated in the example of Figure 31.

The B section has one of the most contagious melodies found in the suite, defined more by its rhythmic character than by its melodic pattern (Figure 32).

"En tres por cuatro" is, overall, an extremely exciting rhythmic work and at the same time, one which exudes emotion from every note.

"Ahí viene el chino" follows the pattern of the other danzas, but this particular one is so descriptive that one can easily picture the subject of Lecuona's music. The A sections, with continuous grace notes give the tinkling effect reminiscent of far-eastern music. It also brings to mind the delicateness and diminutive stature associated with the people (Figure 33).

And then comes the intense middle section which almost seems to express in music the strength of body and mind acquired by the dedication and hard work of the Chinese coolies on the island of Cuba (Figure 34).

In the words of Ayala referring to the danza, "One really sees him walking more than hearing him, and one almost understands the big words

The image displays a musical score for the piece "¿Por qué te vas?" by Lecuona, specifically measures 5 through 11. The score is presented in two systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system (measures 5-11) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The melody in the treble clef features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, with some notes tied across measures. The bass clef accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern, frequently beamed in pairs. The second system (measures 12-13) continues the melodic and harmonic development, with the treble clef showing more complex rhythmic patterns and the bass clef maintaining a similar accompaniment style. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 2/4.

Figure 30. Lecuona, "¿Por qué te vas?" Measures 5-11



*Allegro maestoso*

*f*

*cresc.*

*cresc.*

8

*cresc.*

Figure 31. Lecuona, "En tres por cuatro," Measures 1-9

The image displays a musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of staves. Each system includes a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is written in a 3/4 time signature and features a complex, rhythmic texture with frequent triplets and sixteenth-note patterns. The tempo marking *allegro* is visible in the first system. The score is enclosed in a rectangular border.

Figure 32. Lecuona, "En tres por cuatro," Measures 21-26

Allegro ma non troppo

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Ahí viene el chino" by Lecuona, covering measures 1 through 10. The score is written for piano and is in common time (C). The tempo is marked "Allegro ma non troppo". The music is in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or F minor). The score is presented in four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a forte (f) dynamic. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system features a more rhythmic and textured passage. The fourth system concludes the excerpt with a crescendo (cresc) marking. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Figure 33. Lecuona, "Ahí viene el chino," Measures 1-10



that he speaks in Cantonese at the end, in the notes that Lecuona brings out from the piano" (Ayala, 1981, p. 137, trans. Gloria Jacobson). The author is referring to the last three measures of the piece (Figure 35).

#### A la antigua (Nineteenth-Century Cuban Dances)

Here Lecuona writes a suite of ten compositions which, as the title implies, are in the nineteenth-century style. Although similar in form and overall construction to the Danzas Cubanas, these are somewhat more subdued in character than their counterparts, leaning towards the music of his predecessor, Cervantes. Such works as the "Arabesque," "Impromptu," and "Minstrels" attest to the influence of the Romantic movement in Europe on the music of Cuba.

"A la Antigua" (In the Old Style) is the one most frequently played out of the suite. Figure 36 is a sample of the tasteful miniature.

#### Religious Works

In a totally different vein are the composer's religiously-inspired "Ante el Escorial" (In Front of the Escorial) and "San Francisco el grande" (Saint Francis the Great).

The impact of "Ante el Escorial" cannot be fully appreciated until one has seen the magnificent Escorial, in the town of the same name, near Madrid. The monastery was built by Philip II, and he made it the royal pantheon, where all Spanish sovereigns, beginning with Emperor Charles V, are buried. Begun in 1563 and completed in 1584, it is one of the largest and most handsome religious establishments in the world. The sight of El Escorial is awesome and spectacular, and Lecuona grasps the mood in the few pages of his work.

The first eight measures, containing three solemn introductory chords, set the character for the rest of the piece. The same chords

The image shows a musical score for piano, measures 88-90. The score is written on two staves, treble and bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is 3/4. The music features a series of triplets in the bass line, with the number '3' written above each triplet. The right hand has a melodic line with a fermata over the final note. The word 'ritardando' is written above the right hand staff, indicating a deceleration. The score is enclosed in a rectangular border.

Figure 35. Lecuona, "Ahí viene el chino," Measures 88-90

Moderato

*p*

*cresc.*

*f*

The image shows a musical score for two systems of music. The first system is labeled 'Moderato' and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system features a crescendo (*cresc.*) and ends with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The music is written in a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 2/4 time signature. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Phrasing slurs are used to group notes across measures.

Figure 36. Lecuona, "A la antigua," Measures 1-8

Ben moderato

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system, labeled "Ben moderato", consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a 2/4 time signature. It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a series of chords and melodic lines. The second system continues the piece, marked with "rit e dim." (ritardando and diminuendo) and "p" (piano). The notation includes various chordal textures and melodic fragments.

Figure 37. Lecuona, "Ante el Escorial," Measures 1-8



are found in the closing measures (Figure 37). This gives way to the Piu mosso, containing a cadenza-like improvisatory section, free of bar lines, beautiful in its simplicity (Figure 38).

The moderato which follows is one of the most symphonic excerpts from Lecuona's entire output. It is clearly reminiscent of the style of the Romantic composers. The fullness and richness of the sound is suggestive of a miniature piano concerto (Figure 39).

"San Francisco el grande" is stylistically related to "Ante el Escorial." Although Bill Zeitung (1955) claims that it "is a musical interpretation of St. Francis," a closer look provides a different explanation. The music seems clearly to depict a church or a cathedral which deeply impressed the composer. Substantiation of this view is straightforward. It is unlikely that St. Francis would have been referred to as "the great." Moreover, the character of the composition itself justifies this new explanation. For instance, the opening measures are clearly a musical depiction of church bells (Figure 40). The succeeding Piu mosso and Moderato sections are grandiose in sound, as is the awesome view of a church or cathedral.

It is in the Piu lento section, however, that the most significant evidence is found. It is a section of hymn-like quality, with a full organ sound, the bell tolls often interrupting the sacred melody (Figure 41).

Lecuona then returns to the original Moderato melody, harmonized with thirty-second-note passages. The work closes with the same chords that introduced the piece.

The image displays four systems of musical notation for piano, arranged vertically. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef.

- System 1:** Features a complex texture with multiple voices. The left hand has a prominent bass line with triplets. Dynamics include *pp rit* and *ff vivace*. There are several *V* (accents) and *tr* (trills) markings.
- System 2:** Shows a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line. A large diagonal line spans across the system, indicating a dynamic or performance change. Dynamics include *fff*.
- System 3:** Contains rapid sixteenth-note passages in both hands. Dynamics include *fff rit*, *ff*, *rit*, and *mol*. There are also *tr* markings.
- System 4:** Continues the rapid passages. Dynamics include *f rit*, *pp*, and *rit*. There are *tr* markings and a *ff* marking at the bottom.

Figure 38. Lecuona, "Ante el Escorial," Measure 33

Moderato

ossia

resc.

ppoco

ppoco

ff

accel.

resc.

al tempo

dim.

accel.

resc.

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Ante el Escorial" by Lecuona, covering measures 34 to 41. The score is written for piano and is divided into four systems, each consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef). The tempo is marked "Moderato" at the beginning. The first system includes the word "ossia" and a dynamic marking of "resc.". The second system features dynamic markings of "ppoco", "ppoco", "ff", "accel.", and "resc.". The third system includes "ff" and "accel.". The fourth system includes "al tempo", "dim.", "accel.", and "resc.". The music is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic contrasts.

Figure 39. Lecuona, "Ante el Escorial," Measures 34-41

Lento ma non troppo

The musical score is presented in two systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system (measures 1-5) begins with the tempo marking "Lento ma non troppo". The right hand features a melodic line with glissando markings ("gva...") and accents. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with a "cresc." marking. The second system (measures 6-10) continues the melodic and rhythmic development, featuring further glissando markings ("gva...") and dynamic changes including "ff" and "acccl...".

Figure 40. Lecuona, "San Francisco el grande," Measures 1-10

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 2/4.

**System 1 (Measures 37-42):**  
 - Title: *Più lento (Religiosa)*  
 - Dynamics: *pp* (pianissimo) at the start, *poco rit.* (poco ritardando) in the middle.  
 - Performance markings: *grit.....* (gritando) and *sva.....* (sforzando) are written above the treble clef staff.

**System 2 (Measures 43-48):**  
 - Dynamics: *più forte* (pizzicato forte), *poco rit.*, *mf* (mezzo-forte), *cresc.* (crescendo), and *dim.* (diminuendo).  
 - Performance markings: *grit.....* and *sva.....* are repeated above the treble clef staff.

**System 3 (Measures 49-56):**  
 - Dynamics: *rit.* (ritardando), *rit. dim.* (ritardando e diminuendo), *p a tempo* (piano a tempo), *p dim* (piano diminuendo), and *rit.*.  
 - Performance markings: *grit.....* and *sva.....* are repeated above the treble clef staff.

Figure 41. Lecuona, "San Francisco el grande," Measures 37-56

Andalucía -- Suite Espagnole

1. "Córdoba"
2. "Andalucía"
3. "Alhambra"
4. "Gitanerías"
5. "Guadalquivir"
6. "Malagueña"

It is in Andalucía where Lecuona's Spanish influence is more clearly evident. Each piece in the suite was inspired by the different peoples, music, and topographies of the Andalucía region, which includes most of Spain south of the Sierra Morena. Zeitung comments on the popularity of the work:

These are by and large Lecuona's most frequently encored works in the semi-classical vein; they are full of a robust, sparkling vitality and sunshine which are particularly Spanish, and the lush sounds of the music itself pile image upon flashing image. (Zeitung, 1955)

Andalucía was divided in 1833 into eight provinces. Two of them -- Málaga and Córdoba -- are subjects of the suite. The Alhambra is an ancient palace and fortress of the Moorish monarchs of Granada, built between 1238 and 1358. It is famous for its delicate and complex ornamentation. In "Guadalquivir" Lecuona sings the beauty of "the great river," the most important in southern Spain. Finally, there is "Gitanerías" (from gitana, meaning Gypsy) in which Lecuona captures the mood of the Gypsies of the region, whose passionate dance themes are heard throughout the country.

Interestingly the suite was not written as a unit. For instance, "Andalucía" was one of the first to be written. It was premiered at Lecuona's appearance at the Capitol Theater in New York. (The orchestra, directed by Erno Rappé had as first violinist none other than Eugene Ormandy.) Its success was instantaneous and tempestuous.

"Malagueña" was written expressly for a tribute given to Lecuona in Cuba's Teatro Martí, celebrating the one-hundredth presentation of the composer's zarzuela, Domingo de piñata.

"Malagueña" is by far the most popular piece of the suite. The first popular arrangement for piano and orchestra was edited in the United States with the title "At the Crossroads." It was followed by arrangements for every possible combination of instruments, and it was interpreted by every major pianist.

Lecuona's tunes go on selling for decades.... "Malagueña," with a steady sale of 100,000 copies a year since 1931, has set something of a record in the catalogs of its New York publisher. In arrangements for everything from brass bands to piano accordion, it is the most consistent best-seller in the U.S. (Sargeant, 1947, p. 154)

Although the literal translation of malagueña is "girl from Málaga," what Lecuona was referring to is the lively Spanish dance by the same name. In triple meter, it is often sung to verses based on popular texts. The dance is a Málaga variety of the fandango.

Lecuona's "Malagueña," also in triple meter, is made up of five sections, marked, respectively, Allegro moderato, Lento, Moderato, Piú mosso, and Vivace. The driving, exciting rhythm which characterizes the work is simple and straightforward, supported by the clever use of the open fifths in the left hand (Figure 42).

The second half of the Allegro moderato consists of brilliant sixteenth-note passages above a wonderful melody in the left hand. It is very guitar-like in character, and its Spanish flavor is undeniable (Figure 43).

The Lento section, with its luscious, seductive melody is one of the finest in Lecuona's entire output. It is interspersed with

Allegro moderato

*p*

*CRASC.*

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 5, and the second system contains measures 6 through 9. The music is written for piano in a 2/4 time signature with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato'. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system concludes with a crescendo (*CRASC.*) marking. The notation includes chords and melodic lines in both the treble and bass staves.

Figure 42. Lecuona "Malagueña," Measures 1-9



The image displays a musical score for the piece "Malagueña" by Lecuona, specifically measures 28 through 35. The score is presented in three systems, each consisting of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system begins with a dynamic marking of *f* and a tempo marking of *a tempo*. The right-hand part of the score features a complex, rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, often beamed in groups of five, with slurs and accents. The left-hand part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. The score is enclosed in a rectangular border.

Figure 43. Lecuona "Malagueña," Measures 28-35

brilliant pp arpeggio passages. Ramírez quotes the American critic Gray Perry who wrote in the Tampa Tribune in 1926, "The middle parts are beautiful, worthy of Albéniz or Ravel" (Ramírez, n.d., p. 59) At the end of the Lento there are no bar lines (Figure 44).

The Moderato section is a crispy, lively one, with staccato markings on the notes of both hands and steady octaves in the left. It is very Spanish in character, with a castanet effect created. (Figure 45)

There is again the demanding octave work in both hands in the Piú mosso. It leads back to the melody of the Lento, richly harmonized. The Vivace is a tour de force, fff from beginning to end, shown in Figure 46.

As Margaret Anderton writes:

Malagueña is of the caliber of a Liszt rhapsody, in point of style and effectiveness, without being as lengthy, or nearly as difficult in its technical requirements. (Anderton, 1932, p. 9)

Of considerable interest to musicians has been the controversy over the key of "Malagueña." Although the key signature shows four sharps, tempting one into believing the piece is in C-sharp minor, notes which do not belong to the scale appear constantly, such as D-natural, E-sharp, and B-natural. Karl W. Gehrken quotes Julius Gold, who asserts:

In brief, the piece in question is in the Phrygian mode, one of the three ecclesiastical or medieval minor modes, here transposed...a minor third lower than its original pitch. Settings in this mode require a signature of one sharp less or one flat more than modern minor. Lecuona's use of four sharps was a mere concession to our understanding of modern minor. This is explained by the fact he wrote the piece for popular consumption; and what could the benighted populace make of a piece presumably in C-sharp minor and with only three sharps in the signature! (Gherkens, 1954, p.23)

This seems to be a reasonable explanation, if one considers the fact that, traditionally, malagueñas begin and end on the dominant of the minor key in which they are set. Thinking of it in the key of

*Lento (a la capriccio)*

*f*

*pp*

*f*

*pp*

*f*

*pp*

*f*

*a piacere*

*rit*

*3*

*f*

*h*

Figure 44. Lecuona "Malagueña," Measures 58-70

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Malagueña" by Lecuona, specifically measures 87 through 90. The score is presented on two staves: a treble clef staff for the right hand and a bass clef staff for the left hand. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. A dynamic marking of *g* (piano) is placed above the first measure of the right-hand staff. The right-hand part features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns, while the left-hand part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The score is divided into four measures. The first measure is marked *g*. The second measure is marked *accel* (accelerando). The third measure is marked *poco* (poco ritardando). The fourth measure is marked *a* (ad libitum). The piece concludes with a *poco* (poco ritardando) marking in the final measure.

Figure 45. Lecuona "Malagueña," Measures 87-90

Vivace

The musical score consists of four systems of piano music. Each system is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is marked 'Vivace'. The dynamics are marked 'ppp' (pianissimo) throughout. The score features a complex rhythmic pattern with many triplets and sixteenth notes. There are several 'V' markings, likely indicating accents or specific articulation. The score includes performance instructions such as 'rit.' (ritardando) and 'accel.' (accelerando). The first system starts with 'Vivace' and 'ppp'. The second system includes 'ppp' and 'rit.'. The third system includes 'ppp rit.' and 'accel.'. The fourth system includes 'ppp' and 'V'.

Figure 46. Lecuona "Malagueña," Measures 125-141

F-sharp minor is also feasible, and then the chords that appear would correspond to the V<sub>7</sub> and the VI, which is also consistent with traditional malagueña patterns.

The overall degree of difficulty of the piece, and its general appeal are best explained by Ramírez.

Malagueña can be eagerly played by a concert pianist to liven up an indifferent audience, or it can be enthusiastically played, with only minor changes, by a worker from Greenpoint, playing in a bar for a few extra dollars. (Ramírez, n.d., p. 112)

"Andalucía" has also achieved world popularity and, although not as technically demanding as "Malagueña," its beauty rests on its enchanting and passionate melody (Figure 47).

The five-note grouping in the left hand continues throughout the entire Allegro vivace. On close study it seems clearly to reproduce the sound effect of castanets. The Molto vivace section, which interrupts the melody, has the same crisp character as the Moderato section in "Malagueña." In a new key, it builds to a ff from a pp. The main theme returns once again, in the original key, but more richly harmonized (Figure 48).

In "Gitanerías," Lecuona captures the passionate dance theme in the opening measures of the piece, marked Presto, in D-minor. (Figure 49) A second theme, in D-major, is later introduced, also carefree in character. A dramatic effect is created through the use of the extreme registers of the keyboard and by a gradual crescendo from p to fff. The work is full of charm and vigor, from beginning to end (Figure 50).

In "Alhambra," as previously stated, Lecuona wants to depict, in music, the character of the famous palace and fortress. The Lento ma non troppo brings forth a majestic, yet subdued view of the Alhambra,

Allegro Vivace

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Andalucía" by Lecuona, measures 1 through 11. The score is written for piano and is in 4/4 time. It begins with the tempo marking "Allegro Vivace" and a dynamic marking of *f* (forte). The music is in the key of D major. The first system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with measures 1 through 4. The second system also consists of two staves with measures 5 through 8. The third system consists of two staves with measures 9 through 11. The bass line features a prominent rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, often beamed in groups of three or four, with some triplets. The treble line features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed in groups. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Figure 47. Lecuona "Andalucía," Measures 1-11

Tempo I

*fff*

The image displays a musical score for Lecuona's "Andalucía," measures 105-112. The score is presented in two systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system begins with a tempo marking of "Tempo I" and a dynamic marking of "fff" (fortississimo). The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with frequent sixteenth-note runs and triplets. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melodic line with many slurs and accents, while the left hand (bass clef) provides a rhythmic accompaniment with frequent triplets and sixteenth-note patterns. The second system continues this intricate texture, with the right hand playing a series of slurred notes and the left hand maintaining the rhythmic accompaniment. The score is enclosed in a rectangular border.

Figure 48. Lecuona "Andalucía," Measures 105-112



The image displays a musical score for measures 1-8 of Lecuona's "Gitanerías". The score is presented in two systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is marked "Presto". The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The first system contains measures 1 through 8. The right-hand part features a melodic line with slurs and accents, including a triplet in measure 1 and another triplet in measure 8. The left-hand part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The second system shows the continuation of the melodic line in the right hand and the accompaniment in the left hand for measures 1 and 2.

Figure 49. Lecuona "Gitanerías," Measures 1-8

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Gitanerías" by Lecuona, specifically measures 72 through 88. The score is presented in three systems, each consisting of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a single treble clef staff. The first system begins with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte). The notation is characterized by a complex, rhythmic texture, featuring numerous sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together in dense passages. The right hand (treble clef) frequently plays chords and arpeggiated figures, while the left hand (bass clef) provides a steady, rhythmic accompaniment. The second system continues this intricate melodic and harmonic development. The third system concludes the excerpt with a final chordal structure. The overall style is highly technical and expressive, typical of the Gypsy-influenced music of the early 20th century.

Figure 50. Lecuona "Gitanerías," Measures 72-88

The image displays a musical score for measures 32-55 of Lecuona's "Alhambra." The score is written for piano and is divided into four systems. The first system (measures 32-35) begins with the tempo marking "Lento ma non troppo" and dynamic markings "ff" and "dim.". The second system (measures 36-40) features a "Lento" marking and a "ppp" dynamic. The third system (measures 41-45) includes a "rit." marking and a "poco" dynamic. The fourth system (measures 46-55) continues the piece with a "rit. poco" marking. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Figure 51. Lecuona "Alhambra," Measures 32-55

which may be seen in Figure 51. The Allegro portion of the work, which follows, is very dissonant in character, probably symbolizing the complex ornamentation of the castle. The dissonances are primarily created through the numerous minor seconds in both voices (Figure 52).

Although not as well known as the other pieces in the suite, "Alhambra," together with "Córdoba" and "Guadalquivir," are gems in their own right. If the suite had been written as a unit, each of the individual pieces might have been equally received by the public.

#### Estampas Infantiles (Diary of a Child)

Estampas infantiles is a unique collection of pieces by Ernesto Lecuona. Its uniqueness rests on the fact that it is probably the only work by the composer written for and about children. The collection is made up of five pieces:

1. "Buenos días" ("Good Morning")
2. "El baile de la muñeca" ("The Puppet's Dance")
3. "Carousel" ("Merry-Go-Round Whirl")
4. "Canción de luna" ("The Moon Lights Up")
5. "Bacanal de muñecos" ("The Dolls Have a Party")

These are pieces that may be easily played by piano students and enjoyed by all. Their simplicity and descriptive character contribute to their charm.

Figure 53 is a passage of "El baile de la muñeca," a waltz in which one practically sees the dolls dancing to the beat.

In "Carousel," the undulating sixteenth-note passages certainly are evocative of the children's ride (Figure 54).

They are all tastefully done miniatures and a valuable addition to the literature of and about children.

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Alhambra" by Lecuona, specifically measures 85 through 99. The score is presented in three systems, each consisting of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The first system begins with a dynamic marking of *fff* (fortissimo) and features a complex, rhythmic melody in the right hand with many beamed notes and a steady accompaniment in the left hand. The second system continues this intricate texture, with the right hand playing a series of sixteenth-note patterns. The third system concludes the passage with a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking, showing the right hand's melody tapering off. Vertical lines with 'v' marks are placed below the bass staff of each system, likely indicating fingerings or breath marks. The entire score is enclosed in a rectangular border.

Figure 52. Lecuona "Alhambra," Measures 85-99

Valse moderato

The image shows a musical score for a waltz titled "Valse moderato" by Lecuona. The score is presented in two systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The music is in 3/4 time and features a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic accompaniment in the left hand. The second system continues the piece, showing further melodic and harmonic development.

Figure 53. Lecuona, "El baile de la muñeca," Measures 1-8

Allegro molto

mf cresc.

dim.

Figure 54. Lecuona, "Carousel," Measures 1-8

Miscellaneous Works

Lecuona's piano output is so extensive that to enter into a discussion of all of them is virtually unrealistic. In addition to the works already mentioned Lecuona wrote waltzes, ensemble works, works for piano and orchestra, preludes, mazurkas, an habanera, and various other works for piano solo. Several of those works will be briefly mentioned as representative compositions in the genre.

Of foremost importance is Lecuona's Rapsodia negra (Black Rhapsody) for piano and orchestra, a suite of folk dances inspired by the Afro-Cuban folk rhythms. Following its 1943 premiere at Carnegie Hall, Newsweek had this to say about the work:

At last Sunday's concert which also honored Cuban Liberation Day, this country heard its first major Lecuona: the world premiere of the composer's Rapsodia Negra. Black Rhapsody turned out to be very Gershwin-esque in conception -- which is not too remarkable because Lecuona is a great admirer of Gershwin's and George himself was crazy about Cuban rhythms. Dressed up with all kinds of Afro-Cuban gourd shaking, stick rattling, and drum thumping, the work also made use of the shell and jawbone of an ass -- a special effect achieved by beating the contraption with the bare fist. Black Rhapsody may not have been 'great' music, but it certainly made great listening ("Jorge Gershwin Lecuona," 1943, p. 98)

It is unfortunate that Newsweek provided so little information concerning the work, since there are no other reviews of it available and it is never performed today in its original form. The article does mention the use of typical African instruments used by the Cuban blacks. There is no doubt that it is precisely those instruments which justify the name of the work. The music itself, although with certain black flavor, is not particularly characteristic of the Cuban blacks. As Figure 55 shows, the music is primarily rhapsodic.

The black aspect seems to be provided by the native instruments. One of the few exceptions is the Allegretto, where the black influence



The musical score for Measure 161 of Lecuona's "Rapsodia negra" is presented in three systems. The first system begins with the tempo marking *a capriccio* and a dynamic marking of *ff*. It features a right-hand melody with a *rit.* (ritardando) followed by an *accel.* (accelerando). The second system continues with *accel.* in the right hand and *rit.* in the left hand, followed by *rit.* and *accel.* in the right hand. The third system starts with *fff* and *rit.* in the right hand, followed by *accel.* in the right hand and *senza rit.* (without ritardando) in the left hand. The piece concludes with a *ff* dynamic. Performance instructions include *L.H.* (Left Hand), *R.H.* (Right Hand), *graz.* (grazioso), and *loco* (loco).

Figure 55. Lecuona, "Rapsodia negra," Measure 161

is more evident in the rhythmic pattern (Figure 56). There are also scattered throughout the work bolero, criolla, tango, and habanera rhythms. The ending is a tour de force labeled Allegro maestoso (Figure 57).

It may be said of the work that its purpose was to satisfy those audiences, outside the Cuban borders, for which it was written, rather than to bring the listener a true representation of Afro-Cuban music. Its virtuosic character comfortably places Rapsodia negra with the nineteenth-century style of the Romantic composers. Nonetheless, the work deserves credit because, in its own modest way, it did bring into the concert hall at least a mild flavor of the music of the island.

As far as waltzes are concerned Lecuona has one of the most beautiful selection ever to come out of Cuba. Among the best known are "Damisela encantadora" (Enchanting Damsel), "Crisántemo" (Chrisanthemum), "La estudiantina" (The Student), and "Vals romántico" (Romantic Waltz). For the most part the waltzes are typical of the genre, but they contain some of the most unforgettable melodies in the composer's output. Although not as technically demanding as some of his other music, Lecuona's waltzes still contain those virtuosic passages typical of the Romantic composers (Figure 58).

Another interesting work is Lecuona's "Habanera" where, as Zeitung puts it, the composer "demonstrates his understanding and feeling for the life of his native land" (Zeitung, 1955).

The habanera is a Cuban dance which originated in the 1840's, the first one being written by Sebastián Yradier. The form then found its way to Spain, where it was treated to various stylized adaptations.

Allegretto

*p* *dim.* *pp*

The image displays a musical score for measures 162-169 of Lecuona's "Rapsodia negra". The score is written for piano and is set in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked "Allegretto". The music is divided into two systems. The first system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) and contains measures 162 through 166. The second system also consists of two staves and contains measures 167 through 169. The score includes dynamic markings: *p* (piano) at the beginning of measure 162, *dim.* (diminuendo) starting in measure 163, and *pp* (pianissimo) starting in measure 166. The notation features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and includes various articulation marks such as accents (^) and slurs. The bass line in the first system is characterized by a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

Figure 56. Lecuona, "Rapsodia negra," Measures 162-169

Allegro maestoso

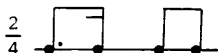
The musical score consists of four systems of staves. The first system shows the piano introduction with a tempo of *Allegro maestoso*. The right hand features a series of chords with a *grac.* marking, while the left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include *fff*, *a tempo*, *fff*, and *ritenuto*. The second system continues the piano accompaniment with *fff accel.* and *acc.* markings, and includes a *grac.* marking. The third system features a *Vivace* tempo change, with *grac.* and *loco* markings, and dynamics of *fff* and *acc.*. The fourth system concludes with a *grac.* marking, a *rapido* section indicated by a wedge, and a return to *a tempo* with *fff* dynamics. A *sec.* marking is present at the end of the system.

Figure 57. Lecuona, "Rapsodia negra," Measures 270-283

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Vals romántico" by Lecuona, specifically measures 33 through 49. The score is written for piano and is organized into four systems, each consisting of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 4/4. The notation includes various musical elements such as chords, arpeggios, and melodic lines. Performance instructions are clearly marked throughout the score, including "ff rit." (fortissimo, ritardando), "a tempo" (return to the original tempo), "rit." (ritardando), "ff" (fortissimo), "dim." (diminuendo), and "rit." (ritardando). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The score concludes with a final cadence in measure 49.

Figure 58. Lecuona, "Vals romántico," Measures 33-49

Characteristic of the habanera is its two-four meter and syncopated rhythm, found in either of the following forms:



Lecuona's "Habanera" strictly conforms to the form, and the composer utilizes the two above-mentioned rhythmic patterns interchangeably (Figure 59).

#### Conclusion

From the brief study of Lecuona's piano music several generalizations may be made:

1. The composer favors small forms in his works for piano. With only a few exceptions, such as the Rapsodia negra, the majority of the compositions are in simple forms, expressing concise, miniature statements.
2. Lecuona's piano music, although not strictly program music, has been inspired by scenes, people, and places with which the maestro came in contact.
3. Lecuona was an eclectic composer, as far as diversity of forms is concerned. Within the small forms we find waltzes, danzas, children's music, religiously-inspired pieces, mazurkas, ensemble works, among many others.
4. Within the piano music of the composer, definite gradations in degree of difficulty are found. Works range from relatively simple to virtuosic and extremely challenging ones.
5. Lecuona makes full use of the variety of rhythms and melodies which he absorbed from his Cuban-Spanish heritage and from the African Negro.
6. He was influenced, although only marginally, by the style of the nineteenth-century Romanticists.
7. Since the composer was, for the most part, the performer of his own works, he wrote music which displayed his particular skills.

Habanera (Moderato)

*mf*

*cresc*

*poco rit.* *R.H.* *len*

Figure 59. Lecuona, "La Habanera" Measures 1-8

## CHAPTER VI ZARZUELAS

### Introduction

The history of the zarzuela as a form has been a long and rich one. From its early development in seventeenth-century Spain to its fervent adoption in the Cuban theater during the late eighteenth century, the zarzuela went through a myriad of peaks and valleys. This chapter will briefly trace this history, both in Spain and in Cuba. This will aid the understanding of Lecuona's zarzuelas and stage works and will justify their place in the Cuban theater.

The process of gathering material on Lecuona's zarzuelas and other works for the stage has been limited by the meager amount of music available from this genre. Of his more than forty-five works, only a handful of musical numbers remain which were extracted from the zarzuelas and became well known on their own. The subject matter of several is known, specifically those which have been recorded: Rosa la china, El cafetal, and María la O. No scores remain, and the recordings have been executed from memory by friends and colleagues of the maestro, who had previously staged the works and had a fair recollection of the music.

Within the constraints, this chapter concentrates on the three works that have been preserved, at least partially, to give as accurate a view of Lecuona's stage works as possible.



### The Zarzuela in Spain

The history of the Spanish zarzuela is traced back to the first half of the seventeenth century. The form derives its name from the palace of La Zarzuela, a royal country seat near Madrid where musical events called Fiestas de Zarzuela were staged to entertain the royalty.

The earliest zarzuelas are attributed to Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600-1681), such as El jardín de Falerina (Falerina's Garden; 1648) and El laurel de Apolo (Apollo's Laurel; 1657). Juan Hidalgo's works, some of which have survived, are a good example of the then prevalent style. Best known are Los celos hacen estrellas (Jealousy Makes Stars), Ni amor se libra de amor (Not Even Love Can Free Itself from Love), and Celos aún del aire matan (Jealousy, Even of the Air, Kills).

In the latter half of the seventeenth century, the zarzuelas began showing the powerful influence of the contemporary Italian and French operas, making use of monodies, duets, and homophonic four-part choruses. They were elaborate stage productions based on mythological subjects, with addition of popular songs in the interludes between acts, instead of in the zarzuela itself. Indeed, Calderón's later works fall in this category, and his mythico-legendary type zarzuelas continued until the first half of the eighteenth century. The vogue for the Italian style was carried to its limit by Sebastián Durón (c.1650-c.1716), Antonio Literes Carrión (1670-1747), and José de Nebra (c.1688-1768).

At the same time, mid-eighteenth century, a reaction began to take place against the aforementioned style. Ironically, it began with Nebra's last works, which turned away from mythological subjects and made fun of the mannered Metastasian operas. Crucial to the movement

was Ramón de la Cruz (1731-1794), whose plots were concerned with ordinary beings. He began using native instruments on stage for dramatic purpose, which was to remain a characteristic feature of the zarzuela.

Out of this arose the scenic tonadilla, "a musical form that carried everything before it and spread like a forest fire." (The New Groves, "Sainete") Basically a satirical, comic opera, the main appeal of the tonadilla was its down-to-earth character. Myths and legends were no longer central to the works, but everyday people in everyday situations.

The scenic tonadillas dealt with a wide variety of subjects, but most of them were of a satirical or picaresque nature, and nearly all of them depicted typical phases of popular life.... The favorite character types were drawn from the lower strata of society.... The essence of the tonadilla (was) a continuous effervescence of wit and satire against everything that tended to crystallize in conventional patterns, be it fashions of foreign opera or the effusions of local color. (Chase, 1941, p. 130)

Through the tonadilla, a Spanish musical idiom was established, according to Chase. It made use of pure folk music, urban street music, and the most representative Spanish dances and songs. Foreign composers, when searching for true Spanish flavor turned to tonadillas as their source.

The zarzuela was then virtually non-existent. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that it re-emerged in a national movement which led the form to new heights. The works of Basilio Basili and Francisco Barbieri (1823-1894) brought about the revival. Barbieri's Jugar con fuego (To Play with Fire) was innovative in that it had three acts, up to then considered impractical. Its success created the genre of zarzuela grande (large zarzuela), implying a three-act work with serious, dramatic subjects, as opposed to the género chico (small genre), in one act and essentially comic. He brought into the domain of

the lyric theater songs and dances authentically Spanish. Captivating the public, the form brought the zarzuela back to the center of musical life.

When the Teatro de la Zarzuela was founded in 1865, Barbieri's efforts were continued through numerous participants who embraced the movement.

#### The Zarzuela in Cuba

The history of the zarzuela in Cuba parallels the development of the zarzuela in Spain. Theater became established with the opening of the Teatro Principal in 1776. One of the first works to be performed was Metastasio's Dido and Aeneas, although it is unclear whether it was an original version or an arrangement. Other small works were staged as well as zarzuelas and concerts in the newly opened theater. By 1790 a Spanish company had made its home in the Principal, and by 1791 Gretry's works were being staged.

But it was the scenic tonadilla, whose popularity had taken over Spain, that was also experiencing its zenith in the theaters of Cuba. From 1790 to 1814, well after the form had all but vanished from the Spanish theaters, "more than 200 tonadillas were sung and re-sung in Havana until satiety" (Carpentier, 1946, p. 78). These were all Spanish tonadillas, and passing through the Teatro Principal were some of the best productions in the genre.

During this time a French company came to Havana and staged works by Moliere, Cambert, Pergolesi, Paisiello, and de Monsigny. The company was very successful, "giving the public a new notion of what a good lyric theater could be" (Carpentier, 1946, p. 80). By the end of the eighteenth century, the musical taste of the Havana public had been greatly refined.

This change in taste probably explains the success of the Spanish company which came to Cuba in 1810 and remained for more than 22 years. Their presence brought new popularity to the tonadilla, but it was now much different from the ones staged in the 1870's. The spectacle did away with the monotonous structure of the previous form, and there was much more attention given to music and dance. It was basically the transformation of the tonadilla into comic opera. The old tonadilla was dead after a vogue of more than twenty-five years.

By 1834 the Italian romantic operas had taken over the theater. The Spanish company was ousted and an excellent Italian one took over in 1834. Works by Bellini, Donizetti, Meyerbeer and Verdi won the public acclaim. It was this great influence of the Italian opera that had such a negative effect in the development of Cuba's own serious art music. During almost a century Cuba lived under its yoke.

Fortunately, a parallel movement was taking place which was to save the Cuban theater. It was the buffo theater, born out of a fusion and transformation of the sainete and the scenic tonadilla.

The father of the buffo theater in Cuba was Francisco Covarrubias (1775-1850). His achievement was the incorporation of guajiros (peasants) and popular types into the theater. After 1812, even though he was still loyal to the Spanish pattern, Covarrubias added to the action Cuban rhythms and melodies. The popular music of the Island was part of the stage works themselves in this new movement. And, from 1850, the black began to be expressed, especially rhythmically.

By 1853 came the first zarzuela, enlarged from the sainete by Rafael Otero. Antonio Medina and Pedro Carreño were also writing zarzuelas. Most of the subjects of the zarzuelas were comments on the

political, social and economic conditions under Spanish rule. The new genre was going to remain intact and arrive, with little variation to the present day.

The popular Cuban theater had its most perfect expression in the repertoire of the theater Alhambra which, for more than thirty years, maintained continuous activity. But it was from 1927 on that the Cuban theater achieved its grandeur, with the versatile output of the prolific Ernesto Lecuona.

### The Zarzuelas of Ernesto Lecuona

#### Early Works

Lecuona formally came into the theater in 1919, premiering, at the Teatro Martí, Domingo de piñata (Sunday of Piñata). But his interest in the theater dated back from his childhood days. Ramírez writes:

His sister Ernestina recalls that one of his favorite games during his youth was that of 'making a scene,' in the back yard of their home, of dramatic-musical-choreographic works in which he was naturally the absolute author; the scenography, generally, was trusted to the sheets and table covers found in the house. The actors were brothers and sisters and children of the neighborhood. (Ramírez, n.d., p.41)

From 1919 to 1927 the maestro premiered approximately fifteen works, including La Liga de las Naciones (The League of Nations; 1919), El recluta del amor (The Love Recruiter; 1919), La carrera del amor (Love's Career; 1921), Diabluras y fantasías (Mischief and Fantasies; 1922), Jaque al rey (Jack to the King; 1922), Radiomania (1925), and Rosalina (1927). Most of these works he wrote for the Compañía de Velasco which, at that time, had in Havana a receptive audience and site for its performances. These early works were so well received that they were soon crossing national frontiers.

These early works established his life-long collaboration with his librettist, Gustavo Sánchez Galarraga. Galarraga was immensely popular during his lifetime. Born of wealthy parents, he turned to poetry against their wishes. His lyricism was considered enchanting, and he was one of the most prolific poets of the times. He was a writer of dramatic works, light sainetes and miscellaneous other works. He was also the poet of the wharves and a favorite among women. His biggest success, however, came through his life-long cooperation with Lecuona. He wrote the majority of the libretti for the maestro, who in turn kept the poet busy with continuous and new demands.

The early works also presaged the continual applause which would receive the rest of Lecuona's works for the theater. The success of these early works is recorded by Ramírez. Concerning Domingo de piñata, "a lyric masquerade in one act and six scenes," (Ramírez, n.d., p. 39) Ramírez quotes Chamaco Longoria:

"Lecuona's music triumphed from the first moment. The numbers were repeated amidst the popular outcry. Lecuona had to come out on stage several times to receive the applause that the public offered him as a reward for a job that reveals a musician of great future and magnificent present." (Ramírez, n.d., p. 39)

And of Rosalima, Ramírez quotes the Heraldo de Madrid:

"Lecuona is a composer of the theater; he knows the rhythm and the character that each situation demands, and his melody is easy and spontaneous. All the numbers of Rosalima were liked by the audience, which applauded without reservation and forced encores of many of them, especially the flute duet." (Ramírez, n.d., p. 42)

Radiomanía was equally well received and the praises were all over the newspapers of Madrid, the city in which it premiered.

But it was with the launching of Niña Rita (1927) in the elegant Teatro Regina that the composer established himself in the Cuban theater and became its representative throughout the world. Niña Rita, with libretto by Castell and Riancho, was a joint musical effort of Lecuona and the very popular and fine composer, Eliseo Grenet. A sainete of Cuban life, its main appeal was its relevance to the times and its national roots. It was also a more artistically elevated work than what had previously plagued the Island. The richness and originality of the music were all factors which contributed to its success. Ramírez quotes J. R. de Larios in La Noche of Barcelona:

"The music of the maestros Grenet and Lecuona is simply delicious, with its romantic and melancholic air. Apart from the folkloric value of its danzas and danzones, very well written and which will achieve fast popularity, we should note a fine waltz of excellent composition which the public had him repeat four times and which is a great example of very fine melody." (Ramírez, n.d., p. 43)

The waltz which Larios makes reference to is the popular "Damisela encantadora," which together with Grenet's "Mamá Inéz" from the same work, was to tour the world from then on. The simplicity and, at the same time, elegance and appeal of the waltz may be seen in the following excerpt in Figure 60.

The following year, 1929, Lecuona premiered no fewer than three new works in the Teatro Regina: Alma de raza (Soul of a Race), El batey (The Sugar Mill), and one of his best known, El cafetal (The Coffee Plantation). La flor del sitio was premiered that same year in the Teatro Auditorium. Little is left of these works today, but it is clear that Alma de raza "dealt with the birth of the Siboneyes in Cuba, the Spanish influence, and their growth and development" (Grandy, 1979).

CHORUS

It's no se-cret that the stars beam; — It's no se-cret that lov-ers  
*Da-mi-se-la en-can-ta-do-ro,* — *Da-mi-se-la por tí yo*

day-dream; — A-pril show-ers bring May flow-ers, — Since the world first be-  
*muc-ro,* — *Si me mi-ras* — *si me ve-sas,* — *Da-mi-se-la se-*

gan that's true. — It's no  
*rae mi a-mor.* — *Da-mi-*

Figure 60. Lecuona, "Damisela encantadora," Measures 41-56



Ramírez provides us with one of the few pieces of evidence about El batey when he quotes a critic who wrote:

"The score is one of the most admirable written by Lecuona, for the musical value of almost all of its fragments and because there is not a number that does not contribute an adequate commentary for the situation in which it is placed. The chant of the Negro has communicable melancholy and in it seem to cry deep nostalgias of the absent and far-away motherland." (Ramírez, n.d., p. 45)

### El cafetal

El cafetal, in one act, is set on a coffee plantation near Havana in the early part of the nineteenth century. "It is exactly in this sort of locale where the most authentic Afro-Cuban folk rhythms and melodies are discovered, and from which Ernesto Lecuona drew his inspiration to compose this most colorful zarzuela" (Irazazabal, n.d.). The main characters are:

Don José	Owner of the plantation
Niña Flor	His beautiful daughter
Africa and Lázaro	A married couple, slaves on the plantation
Cipriana	An old and ugly widow who is spending some time in the plantation
Niño Alberto	Cipriana's nephew

After the opening scene, establishing the local atmosphere, Niña Flor, urged by her father to be married, states she is ready to do so when she finds the gentleman whom she had seen only once at the cathedral of Havana and with whom she immediately fell in love. A comic interlude is created by Cipriana when she makes amorous advances to Don José.

Africa the slave then proceeds to reveal, probably in the most magnificent song of the entire work, her suffering at Lázaro's indifference towards her. It is the "Lamento africano" (African Lament), quoted in Figure 61.

Canto (♩)

A - fri - ca - na soy mo - re - na es mi az y en mi

san - gre ar - dien - te va el vol - can — A - fri - ca - na soy yo soy lu - cu - mi y un yu -

go dees - cia va pesa en mi — en mi co - ra - zón la - te - na - pa - sión pa - sión

que ja - más pa - ra mi se - ra y en mi cruel de - sar - mi con sue - lo es — so - llo

*mf*

*cresc.*

*mf*

*p rit.*

Figure 61. Lecuona, "Lamento africano," Measures 6-20

The ending is a powerful and passionate one (Figure 62). The text is no less dramatic. Africa sings of the misery associated with slavery:

Africana soy	African am I
Morena es mi faz	Black is my face
Y en mi sangre ardiente	And my blood rages
Va el volcán.	Like a volcano.
Africana soy,	African am I,
Yo soy lucumí	I am lucumí,
Y un yugo de esclava	And the yoke of slavery
Pesa en mí.	Weights on me.
En mi corazón	In my heart
Late una pasión	There lies a passion
Pasión que jamás	A passion that never
Para mí será,	For me will be,
Y en mi cruel pesar	A heavy pain that is mine
Mi consuelo es	And my consolation is
Sollozar en un cantar	But to sing
Mi dolor.	My sadness.
Llorar, del esclavo es la	To weep, for the fatal luck
suerte fatal.	of the slave.
Sufrir es la cruz que nos	Suffering is the cross
mandan cargar.	we bear.
Huir es el ansia profunda	To flee is our deepest hope
Del que vive entre	To live beyond this
el cepo feroz.	imprisonment.
Morir es tu solo consuelo,	To die is your only hope,
lucumí.	enslaved one.
Africana soy, yo soy lucumí.	African am I, I am lucumí.

(El cafetal)

(translation: Pedrito Fernández)

Lázaro, meanwhile, confesses his love for Niña Flor to the old slave, and the impossibility of loving Africa. He states his willingness to maintain his love silent and his hope that no other man wins her. If and when this should occur, Lázaro cries, he will commit suicide. The old slave departs in horror, leaving Lázaro to sing his romanza, "Canto carabalí," another musical treasure in the zarzuela.

When Niño Alberto arrives at the plantation to spend some time with his aunt, Niña Flor recognizes him as the man she met at the cathedral. In the beautiful duet that follows they confess their mutual love.

Lázaro's desperation reaches a climax after overhearing the revelations, and when Africa reproaches him for his indifference, the slave

es tu so - lo con sue - lo lu - cu -

*(p)*

*mezzo rit a cap*

mi A - fri - ca - na soy yo soy lu cu - mi

Ah!

*(fz) (fz)*

Figure 62. Lecuona, "Lamento africano," Measures 81-95

does not deny his love for Niña Flor, and Africa promises to seek revenge by telling everything to Niño Alberto.

After some lighter moments, when the newly betrothed couple accepts everyone's good wishes, Niño Alberto is momentarily alone. Africa takes the opportunity to tell him of Lázaro's love for Niña Flor, at which moment he vows to punish the slave. Lázaro then arrives with a sprig of flowers he intends to place at Niña Flor's window as a farewell to his hopeless love. Niño Alberto seeing him, and believing him to be trying to enter the house, attacks the slave, killing him. The work ends with Africa weeping in anguish at the feet of her dead husband.

Overall, El cafetal is a tragedy, a sad commentary on the life of slavery. It is best expressed by Lázaro when he sings:

<p>;Qué triste es ser esclavo Carabalí ;Qué triste y negro sino hay en mí! ¿Por qué Dios, tú me   abandonas en mi dolor? ...triste es nacer esclavo y ansiar Con el corazón gozoso, la libertad.</p>	<p>How sad is the Carabalí slave! How sad is the Negro's fate! Why, O Lord, have you abandoned   me in my sorrow? ...sad is to be born a slave With a gay heart that anxiously   seeks freedom.</p>
--	---

The music, for the most part, suits and enhances the action. There is an exciting rumba towards the end of the zarzuela, danced by the black slaves at the engagement party given for Niña Flor. Popular rhythms appear throughout the entire zarzuela which, together with the "Lamento africano" theme that recurs throughout the work, contribute to the musical unity of El cafetal.

#### María la O

The year 1930 was equally fruitful for Lecuona regarding stage works. Premiered in the Teatro Payret were El Callesero (The Calash Driver), El maizal (The Corn Field), El amor del guarachero (The Love of the Guaracha Dancer), and La mujer de nadie (No One's Woman). Little

may be surmised today about these works except, as one may read in the numerous quotations in Ramírez's book, that they were all consistently well received, both by audiences and by critics everywhere.

María la O was also premiered that same year, becoming the best known in the Cuban repertoire. It is practically impossible to document the craze that followed its premiere. Suffice it to look at the critics whom Ramírez quotes to grasp the magnitude of its popularity. Ramón Becali summed it up by writing: "Lecuona created in María la O the richest, freshest, and most vigorous of his prodigious inspiration." (Ramírez, n.d., p. 47) And, according to his friends that remember, this landmark zarzuela was written by the composer while in his room at a Havana hotel. There was no piano available.

María la O was probably inspired by the mulatto woman of the same name who lived in the city of Santiago de Cuba during the first half of the nineteenth century. She was extremely well known during her lifetime. The zarzuela is in two acts. The setting is Havana, 1880. The main characters are:

María la O	Beautiful mulatto woman
Fernando de Alcázar	Young, handsome aristocrat
José Inocente	"El curro del manglar" (The dandy of the mangrove plantation)
Caridad	A presumptuous and meddling Negro woman who pretends to play the grand dame
Santiago Mariño	Rich Spanish shoemaker
Niña Tula	
Marqués de Palmar	Her father

The story opens in Caridad's home where she is throwing a party in celebration of her Saint. "The cream of Havana's society is gathered there, amused by the eccentricities of the Negro woman" (Lecuona, María la O, FM 73, record jacket notes). The conversation of the guests indicates that Caridad claims to be loved by Santiago Mariño, but that

he is really in love with María la O. Mariño enters the party and asks for María. When he admits his love for her, Caridad is furious. She reminds him that the mulatto woman is in love with Fernando de Alcázar, and, at any rate, he should be careful because José Inocente, also in love with María, has sworn to punish whoever would try to seduce her. María and Fernando then enter the party. In the midst of the brilliant reception scene, José Inocente interrupts and demands that Fernando have the greatest respect and consideration for the mulatto woman and warns him that just because he is rich and an aristocrat, he has no right to make fun of her if he plans to do it by marrying the daughter of the Marqués, as it is rumored. In spite of the violent scene the party proceeds after José departs.

The next scene is set on the street where María la O lives. José Inocente watches intently for María's return from the party. When Fernando de Alcázar says good night to her, José approaches María la O and suggests she go to the house of the Marqués de Palmar if she wants to verify the deceit of her lover. Fernando will be there, he says, courting Niña Tula. Left alone after being angrily dismissed, José sings a beautiful romance, expressing his sorrow and loneliness.

Beginning to have suspicions, María goes to the home of the Marqués. When Fernando is alone, after having been with Niña Tula, María asks where his love really lies. Fernando treats her contemptuously, and they sing a duet.

From there María goes to the mangrove plantation where she tells José of Fernando's deceit. She tells him that she has given Fernando a period of three days to break up with Niña Tula, and if he does not, she will kill him. José Inocente then states that vengeance belongs to him and vows to execute it, thus demonstrating his love for María la O.

The next scene takes place in the Alameda de Paula; beside the wharves. María la O waits there ready to kill Fernando when he goes through to get on the ship that would take him and Niña Tula on their honeymoon. It is at this point that María sings her song of desperation, whether to kill Fernando or suffer her misery in silence. Figure 63 illustrates the romance that travelled the world. And the famous chorus is shown in Figure 64.

But José Inocente is sure of what he will do, and he is shocked when, right before he is about to stab Fernando, María intervenes. The following dialogue takes place:

María: No, José Inocente.  
 Fernando: But why? You were going to kill him.  
 María: Yes. But the blood of his blood  
           I now feel within me,  
           for that which now stirs within me  
           is his son, señor.

This zarzuela exemplifies the type of political statement about colonialism that Lecuona often dealt with in his work. The exploitation of mulattos by the Spanish aristocracy defines the relationship between María and Fernando. Lecuona also fearlessly brought out into the open black culture and blacks as people. For a scene in which María goes to the Nañigos for advice, the composer writes a score and action derived directly from ethnic witchcraft and voodoo.

#### La guaracha musulmana and Rosa la china

La guaracha musulmana and Rosa la china were the two most important works premiered in 1932, at the Teatro Martí.

La guaracha musulmana is a comic operetta which, as the title implies, is a picturesque mixture of the national and the Moorish.

Moorish is the environment and Moorish are the clothes, but the spice is not in the clothing. The Creole teasing shows its head, waggish and disrespectful, in between the pleats of the



Moderato

Crim-son trop-ic  
Mu-lai-tain-fe

PIANO *p*

moon, watch-es man and maid Cub-an moon is smil-ing at their ser-e-  
liz tu-ti-daa-ca-bi de-ri-say gua-ra-chas seha-ro-toel bon

*cresc.*

nade Both in fond em-brace, don't know time or place In the spell of  
zi Q'no-i-as a yer tem-blun-do-du-mor y con i-tu

*cresc.*

*poco rit.*

love di-vine, skles a-  
sion jun tu-aun hom-bre

*poco rit.*

Figure 63. Lecuona, "María la O," Measures 1-11

CHORUS  
rit

Ma-ri-a. My own, rest with-in my arms  
"Ma-ri-a la O" ya no mas cas-tar

Ma-ri-a. My Own, blessed with all your charms  
"Ma-ri-a la O" ho raga de lia-rac

*creac.* Fate has smiled on me, nev-er dreamed I'd be,  
y de re-cor dar et tiem po fe lis

*f* With you con-stant-ly You are mine, mine a-lone  
*rit* *f* *rit* *f* *rit*  
de ras de-tes qe fu-gas ya co-lin

*p* rit  
Ma-ri-a. My  
Ma-ri-a la

Figure 64. Lecuona, "María la O," Measures 21-37

farce. Lecuona has adorned the book of Sánchez Galarraga with musical pages of varied color. (Ramírez, n.d., p. 54)

Remaining from the operetta is the romance "Aixa," a few pages of captivating melodies.

Fortunately, as in the case with El cafetal and María la O, a recording is available of Rosa la china, although not a score. The work, in one act and five scenes, has as main characters:

Rosa la china	
Dulzura	Rosa's exploiting husband
José	Rosa's lover
Preciosillo	A professional gambler
Doña Taña	Elderly woman in the neighborhood
Doña Calixta	Elderly woman in the neighborhood
Greta	Young girl

The action takes place in Havana, in such well-known places as the Parque Maceo, the Bridge of Lisa, and Vapor Street. It is the Sunday of the Carnaval, and Dulzura lazily reads the paper in front of his bedroom door. Other characters are going about their duties while the maintenance person in the brothel sweeps the patio. The old pious lady, obsessed with gambling, is requiring payment from the professional gambler. He, in turn, flirts with Greta, who aspires to be a movie star. The old women gossip about Rosa la china to the point where the overseer forces them to quiet down. To him, Rosa later confides her miserable life with her husband and of the indifference of José, whom she loves. When the overseer leaves, Rosa and José sing their mutual love in a beautiful duet. José then bravely announces his amorous intentions to Dulzura and challenges him to a duel.

At the place where the duel is to occur, the masqueraders get difficult with Doña Calixta, who is promptly rescued by her neighbors, Doña Taña and Greta. After Preciosillo the gambler makes fun of them,

they decide to go to the police. Meanwhile, Rosa arrives, eager about the duel, and finds out the encounter will take place in the evening at the Puente de Lisa.

At the given time and place, Rosa waits for the men. Dulzura arrives and is surprised to find her there. She begs for him not to kill José, but to no avail. She then grabs the knife and kills him, making him fall over the bridge. When José arrives he finds a desperate and triumphant Rosa who tells him what happened. A comparsa is passing through and they mingle in it to leave unnoticed.

In Vapor Street, after a scene with Doña Calixta, Doña Taña and Greta, in the wake of the Carnival, Rosa and José appear. They are headed for the brothel to which they decide to return and pretend to ignore what happened.

In the ensuing fiesta on the patio, amid songs and frolic, the police arrives to arrest Rosa for the murder of Dulzura, whose body has been found as well as proof of her guilt. Amid the general horror, Rosa la china is taken away.

Francisco Ichazo summarizes the fine music of Rosa la china when he writes:

The music has that fluidity and unending melodic vein characteristic of Lecuona . . . . It is a pretty chorus that of the guaracheros in the second scene. The romance of Rosa la china is too well known to go into details here . . . . The comparsa is well done, both visually and musically . . . the tango congo which appears in the last scene was received with very heated applause. (Ramírez, n.d., p. 53)

#### Lola Cruz and Other Stage Works

The year 1935 was an equally productive one for the maestro. Premiered were Julián el gallo (Julian the Rooster), Lola Cruz, El Torrente (The Torrent), Aires nacionales (National Airs), Estampas tropicales (Tropical Scenes), and Las mujeres mandan (Women Command).

Of these, Lola Cruz, in two acts, was the most successful and, like María la O, gained immediate popularity, playing for more than four consecutive months at the Teatro Auditorium, where it premiered.

Figure 65 is an excerpt of the romanza from Lola Cruz.

The production of stage works declined in Lecuona's later years. A few were produced between 1941 and 1946, although none nearly as successful as his previous achievements. They included La de Jesús María (Belonging to Jesús María; 1941), Cuando La Habana era inglesa (When Havana was English; 1942), La Cubanita (The Cuban Girl; 1942) and Mujeres (Women; 1946).

Before his death Lecuona was working, according to Ramírez, on three other works, two of which, Rosa and El sombrero de yarey, had the maestro's own libretti. The other, Sueños Locos (Crazy Dreams) had a libretto by G. Fernández Shaw. The works were never completed.

#### Conclusions

It is a difficult task to draw conclusions and form generalizations about Lecuona's zarzuelas when the information available is, at best, meager. But we are fortunate to have access to recordings of the better known works in this genre. By briefly analyzing them, as we have done in this chapter, we have gained some insight into part of Lecuona's output. According to friends and colleagues interviewed this insight may be generalized to most other works in this category.

Following is a brief summary of those traits, both musical and non-musical, found in the zarzuelas.

1. They all dealt, as zarzuelas typically do, with everyday people and situations, concentrating on the lower strata of society.

The musical score consists of four systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The lyrics are in Spanish and are written below the vocal line.

System 1 (Measures 18-21):  
 Vocal: *a mor* ..... *Lo-la Cruz Co do*  
 Piano: *ff* (fortissimo), *dim* (diminuendo)

System 2 (Measures 22-25):  
 Vocal: *yer fue a ve - gri - a de - ro hoy ya bu vi - da co - dees de*

System 3 (Measures 26-29):  
 Vocal: *ver su - vi - gar co - na - zoy cu qui - sie - ras*

System 4 (Measures 30-34):  
 Vocal: *mas a - sar, fue - ron co - vi - gar la - mo es Lo - la*

Figure 65. Lecuona, "Lola Cruz," Measures 18-34

2. They exposed the life, customs, folklore and humor of the lower class.
3. They brought out into the open, and sympathized with, the burden of the black slaves. They made a statement on their real condition. No longer were the slaves viewed as a happy-go-lucky mass of people, but as suffering individuals longing for a life of freedom.
4. The composer elevated the status of the Negro to one of importance by using their music, rituals and traditions as an integral part of the zarzuelas.
5. Many of the zarzuelas were socio-political statements on the period of Spanish rule. The stories of mulattos that had been used and abused by the Spanish colonizers, for instance, were passed on from generation to generation.
6. The zarzuelas exposed the prejudices, conflicts and social problems among the Cuban populace.
7. Regardless of the subject of the zarzuela there was always humor and comic interludes which served as tension releasers.
8. The plots of the zarzuelas ranged from farce to tragedies, providing audiences with a wide variety of choice.
9. The quality of the literature in the libretti often did not live up to the importance of the subject matter.
10. The works are saturated with the song, dances, and music of the people; there is an even mixture of the Spanish, the African, and the Cuban.
11. All the zarzuelas, whether comic or serious, were imbued with the romanticism and sentimentality so loved by the Cuban audiences.

CHAPTER VII  
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research suggests the conclusions that are listed below, but it also leads to a recognition that additional work must be done. Such work is in the discipline of musicology, music education, and concertizing. This chapter deals first with the conclusions and then with recommendations.

Conclusions

Ernesto Lecuona and his music were and still are a major factor culturally and musically in Cuba and Latin America. The importance of Lecuona derives from the man as an individual, from the music he composed, from the influences on society, and from his influence on music. This summary of conclusions from the research is divided into those four categories to aid in the comprehension of the broad and profound effect he had, and to separate the biographical conclusions from the musicological.

The Man

- o Lecuona was a hard-working individual who, practically through his own efforts, made a name for himself.
- o He had a warm personality and friendly disposition which won him friends and opened doors for him wherever he went.
- o He was a simple man of simple tastes who did not brag about his money. He had an unassuming nature.
- o His upper-middle class status did not keep him from being concerned with problems in the society. This social consciousness was reflected in his personal life and in his music.



- o His nationalistic personality -- loving both Spain and Cuba -- was reflected in his life style and his works.

#### His Music

- o Lecuona's output was so extensive and diverse that it inspired comments such as that by Jacinto Guerrero who said: "Lecuona, by himself, is a Society of Authors" (Ramírez, p. 59)
- o His work is imbued with Afro-Cuban rhythms; it is nationalistic music in every sense.
- o His music is inspired by and reflects the music of Spain as well as that of Cuba.
- o Lecuona's work shows influences of the Romantic movement.
- o He scored equal success in both serious and popular music, appealing to all audiences.
- o He became as familiar to and loved by the man-on-the-street as Gilbert and Sullivan were to their English counterparts.
- o There is enough variety to appeal to students and professionals, as far as technical difficulty is concerned.
- o His music, whether piano music, songs, or zarzuelas always carried a message or was the musical representation of people, places, or things.

#### His Influence on Society and His Contemporaries

- o It was through Lecuona that many artists were introduced to the national and international scene.
- o He encouraged newcomers and helped develop their talents.
- o His social commentary brought out into the open the social problems of Cuba.
- o Blacks and African culture took on a new respectability in his music. As a result blacks tended to be seen in a new light in the culture and to be afforded that new respectability.
- o Lecuona helped to refine the musical tastes of the Cubans by writing semi-classical music that was appealing and not too abstract.
- o His formation of the Orquesta de la Habana contributed greatly to the development of classical music performance in Cuba.
- o He gave Cuba an international name in the field of music.

- o His music has served as a focus of cultural unity for the Cubans in exile.

#### His Influence on Contemporary Music and Musicians

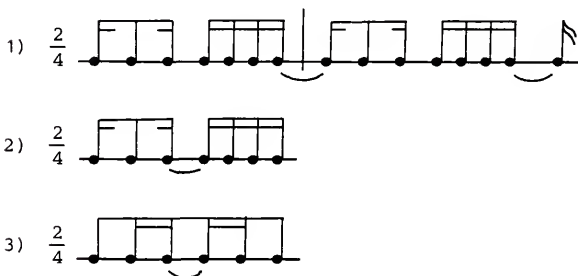
- o He was an inspiration for the composition of Afro-Cuban works.
- o Lecuona provided new impetus to composers to export Cuban music to the international market.
- o Through his generosity, he brought to the music scene a myriad of unknown musicians.
- o His international recognition, bringing the name of Cuba outside its borders, gave Cubans pride in themselves and their capabilities.
- o He introduced the music of other contemporary composers by performing them in his concerts, especially the "Lecuona concerts."

#### Recommendations

- o There are few if any records of Lecuona's music currently being made, and existing recordings are old, often of poor quality, and cover but a fraction of the composer's output. Thus, there is a crying need for new good recordings of Lecuona's music.
- o Outside of the Cuban community, where Lecuona is taken seriously, his music is seldom played except in popularized form. Surely such an omission indicates more performances, both at colleges or universities and at the professional level.
- o Voids in the documentation of Lecuona's music recommend further work in gathering his music, even to the extent of transcribing the music from the memory of colleagues.
- o The omission of substantive reference to Lecuona requires that music history textbooks, especially those dealing with Latin American music, be revised to deal with this glaring deficiency.
- o Since the Spanish-speaking community has no organized biographical or musical resource on Lecuona, this work or parts of it should be translated into Spanish to be made available to it.

GLOSSARY

**Bolero** A dance, of Spanish origin, introduced in Cuba at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the Cuban version, the bolero appears in 2/4 time. Its form consists of a brief introduction followed by two parts of sixteen to thirty-two measures each. Rhythmically, a bolero is notated in one of the following ways:



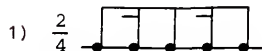
**Canción** Song

**Carabalí** Member of an African tribe who, upon his arrival as a slave to Cuba, continued his allegiance to his cult, maintaining his unique religion, worship, customs, and rituals.

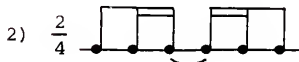
**Carnaval** Carnival; a period of merriment and festivities taking place before Lent, from the sixth of January to Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras). Catholic countries have celebrated it for hundreds of years, often becoming an elaborate annual event. In many countries, people take to the

streets dancing, singing, and wearing a variety of costumes.

Cinquillo The rhythmic pattern



or




often found in boleros and other Cuban dances.

Comparsa A sort of mass-participation dance, performed by masked people, usually on the streets. Popular during the Carnival season.

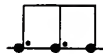
Conga A large drum, probably of the Congo. It is also an Afro-Cuban dance in two-four time with essentially a march rhythm. It is based on a two-measure pattern; the first is symmetrical, but the second is syncopated, the second beat anticipated by a sixteenth note. Usually danced in a conga line, wherein participants hold on to the waist or shoulders of the person ahead. The syncopation is marked by a kick and a brusque movement of the body.

Criolla A form, of both Spanish and African influence. It consists of a brief introduction followed by two parts of sixteen measures each, with phrases of two to four measures. Rhythmically it is characterized by six-eight figures in the melody against three-four in the accompaniment, creating a hemiola effect.

- Danza A Cuban dance, danced independently by couples, which developed from the contradanza. In two-part form, the danza was full of joy and gaiety.
- Guaracha A genre not presently cultivated. Originally a Spanish dance, it was introduced to Cuba, where it adapted to the rhythms of the Island. Characteristic of it was a group of rhythmical combinations in no certain order and sensuous movements by the dancers and mischievous texts.
- Habanera A dance of as yet disputed nationality although evidence strongly suggests that it originated in Cuba in the 1840's, finding its way to Spain where it was adapted and stylized.
- Malagueña Literally, "girl from Málaga." Also the name given to the Málaga version of the popular fandango. The lively Spanish dance is in Triple meter, and it is often sung to verses based on popular texts.
- Náñigo Member of an African tribe who, upon his arrival as a slave to Cuba, continued his allegiance to his cult, maintaining his unique religion, worship, customs, and rituals.
- Pregón Chant of the common street vendor used when voicing the goods and quality of the goods for sale.
- Revista A musical review.
- Sainete A short, farcical type of comic opera which became popular in Spain during the late eighteenth century. It dealt with ordinary characters in everyday life, to the point of often becoming vulgar.

Tango congo "An African modality which was cultivated preferently (sic) in the theater although its characteristic rhythm pattern,  has been used in other genres by composers" (Grenet, 1939, p. 44).

Tresillo The rhythmic pattern

1)  $\frac{2}{4}$  

or

2)  $\frac{2}{4}$  

often found in bolero and other Cuban dances.

Tonadilla A Spanish short, satirical, comic opera. Its greatest appeal was its down-to-earth characters, usually drawn from the lower class society.

Zarzuela "The most important type of Spanish opera, distinguished from ordinary opera in that the music is intermingled with spoken dialogue, as in comic opera. Its subjects, however, are not restricted to comedy." (Harvard Dictionary of Music, "Zarzuela")

APPENDIX A  
LIST OF MUSICAL WORKS OF ERNESTO LECUONA\*

This is an exhaustive list of all compositions by Ernesto Lecuona that have been identified by this research effort. The pieces are dated in parentheses following the title according to the following convention:

- o When the precise date of composition is known, the date is given
- o When only the copyright date is known, that date is given, preceded by "c."
- o When the date may only be approximated, the dates given show the span of years during which the piece was written

Songs

Abril -- berceuse (c. 1932)  
Adiós, mi amor -- capricho  
Aguinaldos blancos (c. 1936)  
Aixa -- romanza  
Al fin (1950-60)  
A la luz de las estrellas (1950-60)  
A la primavera -- berceuse  
Allá lejos un cantar  
Americana soy -- capricho  
Amor -- berceuse (1920-30)  
Amor, amor  
Amor que ya se fué (1950-60)  
Amor tardío (1950-60)  
Aquel beso que me distes (1920-28)  
Aquella tarde -- criolla bolero  
Aquellos besos -- impromptu (1920-30)  
A una golondrina -- barcarola  
Ave del paraíso

---

\* The greater portion of this list may be credited to Lecuona, by Arturo Ramírez

Ave fénix  
Ave lira  
Baila usted? -- danzón  
Balada  
Bajo el claro de luna ---criolla (1921)  
Bajo las palmeras  
Bésame tú  
Besos  
Bien sé que te ríes  
Blanca flor  
Butterfly  
Canción de la rosa  
Canción del mambí  
Canción de los aguinaldos blancos  
Canción del regreso  
Canción gitana  
Canta mi clave  
Cantaba la alondra  
Cantaba el colibrí  
Cantando voy  
Canto caribe  
Canto de los estudiantes  
Canto indio (1918-20)  
Canto Carabalí  
Canto negro  
Canto siboney  
Celos  
Chilena gentil (1920-30)  
Clavel rojo  
Claveles para tí  
Como arrullo de palmas  
Como flor de lys  
Como flor tronchada  
Como presiento  
Corazón, no pidas más (1920-30)  
Costa rica  
Cuando muere el sol  
Cuando te veré otra vez (1950-60)  
Cuando yo muera  
Cubana  
Dame tus rosas  
De amor, niña divina  
Déjame decirte  
Desengaño -- berceuse (1924)  
Devuélveme el corazón  
¿Dónde está el amor?  
El cisne (1916)  
El faisán  
El jardinero y la rosa  
El jilguero en la flor  
En la quietud de la noche (1950-60)  
En mi noche triste (c. 1934)  
En mi soledad  
En noches de luna (1920-30)



En una noche así  
Es un golfo  
Esclavo libre  
Escucha corazón (1950-60)  
Escucha el ruiseñor  
Esperando por tí  
Fantasía negra  
Flor de cabaret  
Flor de loto  
Funeral -- lied (1920-28)  
Garza real  
Guajira y bolero  
Habana -- marcha (1920-30)  
Hastío -- criolla (1920-30)  
Ilusión ¿dónde estás?  
Indiana  
Junto a tí  
Juventud  
La brisa y yo  
La coqueta -- marcha  
La de los ojos en blanco  
La gitana  
La hermana (1920-30)  
La maja  
La negra lucumí  
Labios  
Lamento africano (c. 1929)  
Linda mexicana  
Los pepillitos  
Luna de plata  
Madrigal (1920-28)  
Mala mujer  
Maracas de cuba  
María la O -- romanza (1930)  
Marilú  
Mariposa  
Marquesita de ojos verdes -- gavota siglo XVIII  
Mazurka del amor  
Mersé  
Me has dejado (1950-60)  
Melodía gris  
Mi amor eres tú  
Mi amor es azul  
Mi amor fué una flor  
Mi corazón se fué (1950-60)  
Mi sueño azul  
Mi sueño fué un cantar (1950-60)  
Mi vida  
Mi vida eres tú  
Muy cerca de tí (1930-40)  
Nada quiero de tí  
Nada tengo de tí (1930-40)  
Negra macuta  
Negra me muero

Negra mersé  
 No digas que no  
 No es por tí (1950-60)  
 No hay perdón (1933-43)  
 No le hagas caso (1950-60)  
 No me engañarás  
 No me niegues el amor (1950-60)  
 No me vuelvas a besar  
 No quiero acordarme (1920-28)  
 No te olvides de mí  
 No tendré compasión (1950-60)  
 No tienes corazón (1950-60)  
 Noche azul (1930-40)  
 Noche de estrellas (1950-60)  
 Noche en flor  
 Nunca me lo dirás  
 Nunca te perdonaré -- berceuse (1919)  
 Nunca volverás  
 Ondas marinas  
 Orgullo  
 Oye tú  
 ¿Para qué? -- impromptu (1924)  
 Pavo azul  
 Pavo real  
 Por eso te quiero (1920-30)  
 ¿Por qué has vuelto?  
 ¿Por qué me has hecho llorar?  
 ¿Por qué no me lo dices? (1950-60)  
 ¿Por qué no vienes?  
 Por tus ojos negros  
 Primavera  
 Princesa de abril  
 Que hubiera sido de tí  
 Que sabes tú  
 Quiero  
 Quiero tu alma  
 Quiero tus besos  
 Quisiera  
 Quisiera olvidar  
 Recordar (1950-60)  
 ¿Recuerdas tú?  
 Rosa de abril  
 Rosa la china -- romanza (1932)  
 Rosa negra  
 Rosalía -- serenata  
 Serenata azul  
 Serenata romántica  
 Si lo quisiera Diós (1920-30)  
 Si me quieres un poquito  
 Si pudiera yo besarte  
 Siempre en mi corazón  
 Sigue con tu vida (1950-60)  
 Sin encontrarte (1950-60)  
 Sin esperanza (1950-60)

Sin tí  
Sin tí no puedo vivir  
Solo tú  
Son guajiro  
Soñé  
Soy razonable  
¿Te acuerdas? -- capricho cubano  
Te has cansado de mi amor (1950-60)  
Te he visto pasar (1950-60)  
Te perdonaré (1950-60)  
Te soñé una vez (1950-60)  
Te quiero, morena (c. 1933)  
Tehuana  
Tengo un nuevo amor  
Tomeguín del pinar  
Traición  
Traje de soirée  
Triste es ser esclavo  
Tu ausencia (1920-30)  
Tú no me quieres  
Tus ojos azules -- criolla-bolero (1924)  
Tus ojos y tu boca  
Tuyo siempre  
Un amor vendrá  
Un beso -- impromptu (1924)  
Un mañana más  
Una mañana de abril  
Valencia mora  
Veracruz  
Ven a mi otra vez  
Ven por mí  
Veneciana  
Vestal serena (1920-28)  
Volviste a mí  
Vuelvo a tí  
Ya tú lo sabes (1950-60)  
Yara  
Yo bien sé (1920-30)  
Yo compadezco (1920-30)  
Yo esperaba un amor (1920-30)  
Yo nada puedo hacer (1950-60)  
Yo no sé por qué  
Yo quiero que tú sepas  
Yo soy ardiente  
Yo te quiero (1920-30)  
Yo te quiero siempre  
Yo quisiera amarte  
Yumurí

Collections of Songs"Versos Sencillos" by José Martí (1930-35)

De cara al sol  
La que se murió de amor  
Mi amor del aire se azora  
Sé que estuviste llorando  
Tu cabellera  
Un ramo de flores  
Una rosa blanca

Verses by Juana de Ibarbourou (c. 1940)

Balada de amor  
Canción del amor triste  
La señora luna  
Señor jardinero  
Qué pena me dá ser mujer

Music for PianoSpanish Music

Ante el Escorial (c. 1943)  
Aragonesa  
Granada  
San Francisco el grande (c. 1944)  
Sevilla  
Suite Andalucía (c. 1928)  
Alhambra  
Andalucía  
Córdoba  
Gitanerías  
Guadalquivir  
Malagueña  
Zambra gitana

Diverse Music

Adiós a las armas  
Bellflower  
Black Cat  
Canto del guajiro (1950-60)  
Cuba y América (1905-06)  
Diario de un niño -- suite (c. 1956)  
Buenos días  
El baile de la muñeca  
Carousel  
Canción de luna  
Bacanal de muñecos  
En las montañas  
Habanera (c. 1954)  
Mazurka en glisado (c. 1940)  
Music Box (1920-29)  
Polichinela  
Preludio en la noche (1950-60)  
Preludio en la tarde  
Rapsodia hawaiana (1925-31)  
Zambra  
Zapateo y guajira

DancesCongas

Barcelona (1935-40)  
 Conga de Rosa la China  
 La conga de Broadway (1935-40)  
 La conga se vá  
 Negrita cocó  
 Panamá (1935-40)  
 Para Vigo me voy (c. 1936)  
 Por corrientes va una conga  
 Se fué la comparsa

Boleros

Amor fugaz (1920-30)  
 Canta morena  
 Lola (1920-30)  
 Mujer  
 Nunca te olvidaré  
 Palomita blanca (1919)  
 Por allá se ha ido (1919)  
 Por un beso de tu boca (1920-30)  
 Quisiera creerte  
 Se fué (1924)  
 Si tú supieras (1924)  
 Soñé que me dejabas...  
 Tu amor  
 Quisiera olvidar  
 Ya sé que me olvidaste (1920-28)  
 Yo sé que tú me quieres (1920-30)  
 Yo tengo una ilusión

Guarachas

Alí Babá  
 Asunción  
 Isabelita no me quiere  
 Maracas  
 Tengo una guajira  
 Tru-cu-tú

Tangos Congos

Allá en el Batey  
 Los curros del manglar (1929-35)  
 Negrita (1920-28)  
 Tango congo de "El cafetal" (1929-35)

Rumbas

En la noche tropical-rumba-fox  
 La rumba blanca

No le hagas caso  
Que risa me dá

Sones

No llores mujer

Dances for Piano

Afro-Cuban

La Comparsa (c. 1939)  
Danza de los Nãñigos (c. 1930)  
Danza Lucumí (c. 1930)  
Danza negra (c. 1934)  
La conga de medianoche (c. 1930)  
...Y la negra bailaba (c. 1930)

Rythmic

Ahí viene el chino (c. 1929)  
Burlesca (1920-28)  
Como baila el muñeco  
En tres por cuatro (c. 1929)  
Futurista (1920-28)  
La treinta y dos  
Lola está de fiesta (c. 1928)  
Mientras yo comía... (1920-28)  
No puedo contigo (c. 1929)  
¿Por qué te vas? (c. 1929)  
...Y la negra bailaba

A la antigua (in the old style)

A la antigua (c. 1943)  
Al fín te ví (1920-28; c. 1943)  
Amorosa (1920-28)  
Arabesque (c. 1943)  
El miriñaque  
Ella y yo (c. 1943)  
Impromptu (c. 1943)  
La cardenense (c. 1943)  
La mulata (c. 1943)  
La primera en la frente (c. 1943)  
Los minstrels (c. 1943)  
Ni tú ni yo (1920-28)  
No hables más (c. 1929)  
Interrumpida (c. 1943)

Dances for Voice and Piano

Andar (1924)  
Aquella noche  
Aquí está (1924)

Dame tu amor  
Dame un besito aquí  
La abuela se llevó al niño  
Lloraba en sueños  
Melancolía (1920-28)  
Muñequita (1920-30)  
Pienso en tí (1950-60)  
Tú serás



WaltzesFor piano

A media noche  
 Aragón (c. 1913)  
 Barba Azul  
 Bésame  
 Bon ton  
 Broken Blossoms  
 Crisántemo  
 En el mar  
 Gardenia  
 Locura  
 Musetta  
 Noche de primavera  
 Ojos triunfadores  
 Parisiana  
 Soñaba contigo  
 Vals arabesque (1950-60)  
 Vals brillante  
 Vals de ensueño  
 Vals de la mariposa  
 Vals de las flores  
 Vals de los mares  
 Vals del Cauto  
 Vals del Danubio  
 Vals del Ebro  
 Vals del Nilo  
 Vals del Sena  
 Vals del Yumurí  
 Vals diabólico  
 Vals en la bemol  
 Vals en re bemol (1930-40)  
 Vals en si mayor  
 Vals maravilloso  
 Vals patético (1950-60)  
 Vals poético  
 Vals romántico (c. 1955)  
 Voilá

For voice and piano

Amor, que bonito has vuelto (1950-60)  
 Blanca nieve  
 Cenicienta  
 Cuento de abril  
 Damisela encantadora (c. 1935)  
 ¿Dónde estás?  
 Es un sueño  
 Estudiantina  
 Florecita del camino  
 Galanes y damiselas  
 La bella durmiente

La princesa está triste  
Los enamorados  
Luna azul  
Mírame otra vez  
Muñeca de cristal  
Noche de estrellas  
Peruana  
Señorita de ojos negros  
Serenata romántica  
Sin esperanza  
Te diré un cuento  
Tus ojos soñadores  
Vals azul  
Vals de amor (1950-60)  
Vals de la rosa  
Vals de las sombras  
Vals de Pierrot  
Vals del antifáz (1919)  
Vals del beso  
Vals del globo  
Vals del Rhin (1913)  
Vals rosa  
Vals triste (1924)  
Vampiresa

Theater Pieces

<u>Year</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Theater</u>
1919	Domingo de piñata	Teatro Martí, Havana
1919	La Liga de las Naciones	Teatro Martí, Havana
1919	El recluta del amor*	Teatro Martí, Havana
1919	La caravana*	Teatro Martí, Havana
1919	Una noche en Maxim	Teatro Martí, Havana
1919	El 20, el de la suerte	Teatro Martí, Havana
1920	El portfolio del amor**	Teatro Martí, Havana
1921	La carrera del amor***	Teatro Actualidades
1922	Diabluras y fantasías**	Teatro Martí, Havana
1922	Jaque al rey	Teatro Martí, Havana
1923	Es mucha Habana**	Teatro Martí, Havana
1924	Levántate y anda**	Teatro Martín, Madrid
1925	Radiomania**	Teatro Apolo, Madrid
1925	Al caer la nieve	Teatro Ruzafa, Valencia, Spain
1926	La revista sin trajes**	Teatro Eslava, Madrid
n/a	Malvarrosa	Teatro Apolo, Valencia, Spain
1927	Rosalima	Teatro Pavón, Madrid
n/a	La revista de esclava	Teatro Eslava, Madrid
1927	Niña Rita*	Teatro Regina, Havana
1927	La tierra de Venus**	Teatro Regina, Havana
1927	La revista femenina**	Teatro Regina, Havana
1927	La liga de las señoras	Teatro Regina, Havana
1929	El cafetal*	Teatro Regina, Havana
1929	El batey*	Teatro Regina, Havana
1929	Alma de raza**	Teatro Regina, Havana
1929	La flor del sitio*	Teatro Auditorium, Havana
1930	María la O*	Teatro Payret, Havana
1930	El maizal*	Teatro Payret, Havana
1930	El amor del guarachero***	Teatro Payret, Havana
1930	El calesero*	Teatro Payret, Havana
1930	La mujer de nadie	n/a
1932	La guaracha musulmana	Teatro La Comedia, Havana
1932	Rosa la china*	Teatro Martí, Havana
1935	Julián el gallo	Teatro Auditorium, Havana
1935	Lola Cruz	Teatro Auditorium, Havana
1935	El torrente*	Teatro La Comedia, Havana
1935	Estampas tropicales	Teatro La Comedia, Havana
1935	Postales habaneras	Teatro La Comedia, Havana
1935	Aires nacionales	Teatro La Comedia, Havana
1935	Las mujeres mandan	Teatro La Comedia, Havana
1937	Sor Inés	Teatro Auditorium, Havana
1941	La de Jesús María*	Teatro La Comedia, Havana
1942	Cuando la Habana era inglesa	Teatro La Comedia, Havana
1942	La cubanita*	Teatro La Comedia, Havana
1944	La Plaza de la Catedral*	Teatro Nacional, Havana
1946	Mujeres	Teatro Auditorium, Havana
1957	Tropicana**	n/a, Barcelona
n/a	Chofer...; ;al Regina!	n/a

\* Zarzuela      \*\* Review      \*\*\* Sainete

Works for EnsembleVoice and Orchestra

Bajo las palmeras  
 Ballet conga (for ballet and orchestra)  
 El Cabildo  
 Mosaico azul  
 Mosaico 3

Violin and Piano

Impromptu  
 Guajira  
 Sevilla

Piano and Orchestra

Rapsodia argentina  
 Rapsodia negra (1940-43)

Piano, Voice, and Orchestra

Del manglar (orchestration by Gonzalo Roig)

Orchestra

Allá en Oriente  
 Bajo las palmeras  
 Camaguey  
 Cantos de España  
 Como suenan los tambores  
 De otros tiempos  
 En la tierra del sol  
 En las lomas de Trinidad  
 En el cañaveral  
 Gitanerías  
 Guanabacoa la bella  
 La comparsa  
 Los muñecos bailan  
 Malagueña  
 Melodías conocidas  
 Melodías de antaño  
 Melodías populares  
 Mosaico cubano 2  
 Mosaico de carnaval  
 Mosaico Habana  
 Mosaico Yumurí  
 Rapsodia tropical  
 Sinfonía del ritmo  
 Tambor y maracas  
 Valses célebres  
 Varadero  
 Viñales  
 1941-melodías de guerra

Miscellaneous MusicPregones

El dulcero (c. 1932)  
El frutero (c. 1932)  
El pirulero (c. 1932)  
El pulpero (c. 1932)  
El sún sún (1935-40)  
Pregón de las flores (1930-40)  
Pregón de los pájaros (1930-40)  
Se vá el botellero

Couplets

Dorotea  
La chica del gato  
La nueva rica  
Maniquí

Music for Films

(Films for which Lecuona wrote partial or complete scores)

Carnaval in Costa Rica, 20th Century Fox (1947)

Under Cuban Skies, MGM (1931)

Always in My Heart, Warner Bros. (1942)

One More Tomorrow, Warner Bros (1946)

Mariana

Pearl Harbor, MGM

La cruz y la espada, MGM

Free Soul, MGM (1931)

Susana Lenox, MGM (1931)

María la O, Mexican film

Adiós Buenos Aires, Argentine film

La última melodía, Cuban film

APPENDIX B  
MEMORABILIA

This appendix contains the last will and testament of Ernesto Lecuona as well as several photographs of the maestro. The material from which copies were made are in the possession of the author.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT  
OF  
ERNESTO LECUONA

I, ERNESTO LECUONA, residing presently at 5004 North Tampania, Tampa, Florida, being of sound mind, memory, and understanding, declare this to be my Last Will and Testament hereby revoking any and all Wills previously made.

1. I direct that all my just debts and funeral expenses be paid as soon after my death as possible and that during funeral services suitable music and flowers be provided and due consideration be given to the religious aspect of such services.

2. I direct that I be buried in an appropriate mausoleum in accordance with the judgment of my Executor hereinafter named and provided the cost thereof be practicable. I further provide that my interment be in New York in the event that Fidel Castro or any other head of government in Cuba be Communist or represent such faction, group, or class be it governed or dominated or inspired by alien doctrine from abroad. On the other hand in the event that Cuba be free at the time of my death, I direct that I be buried there in accordance with the same standard herein set forth.

3. I direct that all Estate taxes and other taxes in any State, territory or jurisdiction of the United States or other country be paid out of my Estate and not out of any gift, legacy, benefit or bequest to any one herein entitled to receive.

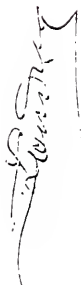


Figure 66. Last Will and Testament of Ernesto Lecuona\*

\* Reproduced xerographically to show Lecuona's signature on each page.



4. I give, devise, and bequeath to my sister, ELISA LECUONA, my country home situated in Marianao, Cuba, and known as "El Chico Country Club".

5. I give and bequeath to LUISA MARIA MORALES, wife of Dr. Carballido, my music library for her own use absolutely and forever.

6. I give and bequeath to ELDA LECUONA and ELENA LECUONA, daughters of LUIS ERNESTO LECUONA, to be shared equally by them, all my original manuscripts for their own use absolutely and forever.

7. I give and bequeath to DR. FRANCISCO CARBALLIDO, Licenciado, all my records and/or files of my original compositions for his own use absolutely and forever.

8. I give and bequeath to PATRICIA BURUNAT my piano presently located in my house at 5004 North Tampania Street, Tampa, Florida.

9. I give and bequeath my car, a 1963 Buick; all my jewelry; clothes and any and all furniture, as well as any and all other belongings and personal effects not previously disposed of to ARTURO ALQUIZAR for his own use absolutely and forever.

10. I direct my Executor hereinafter named to sell my house in Tampa, Florida, and to distribute equally and share and share alike the proceeds derived from such sale to my niece, IIBA LECUONA, and to my nephews, RAFAEL and FERNANDO LECUONA, for their own use absolutely and forever.

11. I give and bequeath all my right, title, and interest in and to my copyrights, royalty agreements of which I am the author or owner, including royalties from sales of any or all of my works relating directly or indirectly to my music compositions, whether derived from performing rights, publishing rights, or other source including recordings and other mechanicals, together with any and all renewals and any claims or causes of action which may arise therefrom or accrue thereto for infringement, plagiarism, or breach of contract, accruing and arising anywhere in the world, as follows:

Fifteen (15%) per cent to my niece, IIBA LECUONA, and to my nephews, RAFAEL and FERNANDO LECUONA, to be divided equally among them; five (5%) per cent to DR. JUAN BATISTA BROUWER; five (5%) per cent to ELISA BROUWER; five (5%) per cent to ELDA LECUONA y Amespil and ELENA LECUONA y Amespil, to be shared equally, viz: two and one-half (2½%) per cent to each; four (4%) per cent to LUIS ERNESTO LECUONA; four (4%) per cent to JULIO CESAR; ten (10%) per cent to CARLOS RAMIREZ; five (5%) per cent to EDGARDO RAMIREZ; five (5%) per cent to ARTURO RAMIREZ; four (4%) per cent to JUAN ERNESTO LECUONA; four (4%) per cent to ESTER LECUONA; five (5%) per cent to ARTURO ALQUIZAR, ARMANDO DE LA TORRE, and ERNESTO GARCIA, to be divided equally and share and share alike provided, however, that they are all in the service of the Testator at the time of his death. In the event that one or more of those last mentioned fails or fail to qualify, then the share to which such person would be entitled is to be divided equally among those qualified or all to him

that may be qualified to take; four (4%) per cent to JULIO BURUNAT; ten (10%) per cent to DR. FRANCISCO CARBALLIDO, Licenciado, my Havana attorney; and fifteen (15%) per cent to JOHN SPERRY, all of which gifts are for their use absolutely and forever.

12. All the rest, residue of my Estate of whatever kind, be it real, personal or mixed, I give and bequeath to my niece, IIBA LECUONA, and my nephews, RAFAEL and FERNANDO LECUONA, to be divided equally, share and share alike.

13. I hereby constitute and appoint as the Executor of this, my Last Will and Testament, my friend and attorney, JOHN SPERRY, and direct that no bond or other instrument be required anywhere for the faithful performance of his duties as such Executor. I constitute and appoint at the same time DR. FRANCISCO CARBALLIDO as my Executor in Cuba in the event that services be required respecting matters related to my property or properties in Cuba.

14. I direct that in the event any legatee or beneficiary of this, my Last Will and Testament, oppose or join in opposing or contesting the probate of this, my Last Will and Testament, such legatee or beneficiary shall automatically forego and forthwith forfeit and lose any and all right, gift, and/or benefit granted hereinabove.

15. Notwithstanding my temporary residence in Florida, I deem and consider New York my domicile and it is my plan, wish and intention that my Will be probated

in the County of New York, State of New York, and that it be construed, interpreted, and considered in accordance with the laws of the State of New York.

16. It is my wish and intention and I so direct that any and all contracts and agreements made with editors' or authors' societies of Europe and of the United States be honored to the fullest and it is my intention and I so direct that the EDWARD B. MARKS MUSIC CORPORATION have preference at all times insofar as publishing rights to my music, whether it be sheet music or making records or any other mechanical reproduction is concerned.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this FIRST day of June, the year Nineteen Hundred Sixty Three.

Ernesto Lecuona L.S.

SIGNED, SEALED, PUBLISHED AND DECLARED by the above named Testator, ERNESTO LECUONA, as and for his Last Will and Testament and witnessed by the undersigned who, at his request and in his presence and in the presence of each other, each signed as subscribing witness thereto, this attestation having been read aloud to said Testator in English and translated in Spanish and said Testator having expressly stated that he read the said Will, knew its contents and that it was his Last Will and Testament.

Wanda Trullini residing at 3318 Avenue of the Americas  
Yvonne C. Brown residing at 2167 Avenue of the Americas  
Francisco Ramirez residing at 1717 West End Avenue



Figure 67. Lecuona at the Piano



Figure 68. Lecuona and Impresario Roberto Rodríguez



Figure 69. Lecuona on the podium



Figure 70. Members of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Lima, Directed by Ernesto Lecuona





Figure 71. Lecuona's First Concert at the Teatro Municipal de Lima, Peru  
December 4, 1934.

Director: Ernesto Lecuona,  
Pianist: Ernestina Lecuona, Soloist: Esther Borja



Figure 72. Lecuona Conducting



Figure 73. Lecuona the Pianist



Figure 74. Autographed Portrait of Ernesto Lecuona to Roberto Rodríguez

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#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Gloria Castiel Jacobson was born in Santiago de Cuba, province of Oriente, Cuba, on December 26, 1951. She left her native land in 1964, becoming a U.S. citizen and residing in Miami, Florida, until 1969.


She attended the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida, where she received her Bachelor's (1973) and Master's (1975) degrees in Music Education.

Ms. Jacobson has done extensive teaching in the Suzuki violin method, both for children and adults, during the past four years. She presently resides in Atlanta, Georgia, where she has her own studio.

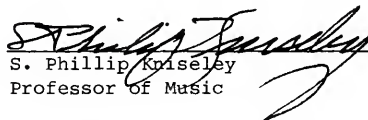
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\_\_\_\_\_  
Gordon D. Lawrence, Chairman  
Professor of Curriculum  
and Instruction

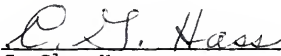
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\_\_\_\_\_  
David Z. Kushner  
Professor of Music

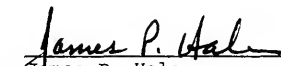
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\_\_\_\_\_  
S. Phillip Kniseley  
Professor of Music

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
C. Glen Hass  
Professor of Curriculum  
and Instruction

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
James P. Hale  
Professor of Music

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education and to the Graduate Council, and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August, 1982

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Dean for Graduate Studies  
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