

VOLUME 1: PROLOGUE

Malena Kuss

At long last, someone has given us a name—Historical fictions and fictional histories—History as aesthetic construct—Our “cultural adventure”

This unprecedented work covers in considerable depth the musical legacies of indigenous peoples, African descendants, Iberian colonizers and creoles, and other immigrant groups that met and mixed in the New World. Within a history marked by cultural encounters and dis-encounters, music emerges as the powerful tool that negotiates identities, enacts resistance, performs beliefs, and challenges received aesthetics. Approached from a number of perspectives, music mirrors an inner history that writers of contemporary fiction can penetrate and historians often fail to capture, providing a point of entry into spiritualized conceptions of the world that take shape in multiple and different ways of being musical. Collectively and individually, the peoples in this region welded powerfully expressive forms by resignifying ancient practices and breeding new life into fragments of traditions brought by colonists, slaves, and settlers. The infinite variety of musical responses to the New World’s complex history, however, maps a wealth of vibrant and dynamic forms that set the region apart from any of its tributaries. This work was conceived to emphasize the role that music plays in human life. As such, it highlights the meanings that traditions carry among practitioners, as seen mostly through the lens of cultural insiders.

As the Polish/German scholar Walter Wiora predicted in an unassuming but prophetic book he called *The Four Ages of Music* (1961 in 1965), the twenty-first century was to be “the age of technology and global industrial culture” that eradicates the predominance of Western (“art”) music. A pioneer among Europeans in realizing the need to approach music history from a global perspective and break artificial barriers between folk and art musics, he relativized the perceived centrality of European culture by projecting it onto the larger canvas of past and future “ages”—such as prehistory, the age of high cultures of Antiquity and the Orient, and the age of globalization and diversity. He was bound, however, to assumptions of linear evolutionism in his conception of a historical sequence of hegemonic cultures, and to a perspective that ultimately remains “ethnocentric ... [because] the configuration of *all* the world’s music is formed about the Third [European] Age as zenith; the rest is preparation and decline” (Treitler 1989b: 130–31). The age of globalization eradicates more than the centrality of any one culture, as it presupposes the simultaneity or interactive coexistence of many musics shaping a shifting quilt best represented in Foucault’s image of the Archive as the site that accumulates and collapses [musical] discourses from the past and the present into a de-historicized metaphorical place. What the twenty-first century foreshadows is nothing less than the replacement of hegemonies by the concept of equivalence of cultures, each understood according to the terms of its own rationality.

We have divided the world into convenient geographic lumps we call “regions” that more often than not assume the connotations of “cultures,” a concept that implies at least a metalevel of commonalities (among them Europe, Asia, and Africa, the original trinity contained within the *orbis terrarum* and

prioritized in that order by the geographers of Antiquity). America erupted as a geographic entity only after it was “discovered” by Europeans, prompting Edmundo O’Gorman’s famous epigraph: “At long last, someone has arrived to discover me!” (Entry for October 12, 1492, in an imaginary Private Diary of America) (1961: 9). Few such “virtual or implicit cultures”—which as totalities only can exist in our imagination—could be more complex or resilient to implicit organicism than the region that came to be called “Latin America.” Extraverted branding (Agawu 2003: xii) is embedded in the colonialist act of taking possession, and the politics of naming for external consumption can turn upside down the logic that names have to correspond to that which they name. The story of how this externally-generated label was affixed to our “region” turned “culture” is but one strand in a web of foundational mythologies that writers of fiction, composers, and scholars often sublimate through pervasive irony.

AT LONG LAST, SOMEONE HAS GIVEN US A NAME

Is “Latin America” a cultural or a geographic concept? This question, which neophytes frequently ask, was explored with unlimited imagination and no small dose of irony when, in the context of the Quincentenary of 1492 that catalyzed reappraisals, the Chilean writer Sergio Marras interviewed sixteen titans of Latin American literature and published these conversations under the title *América Latina: Marca registrada* (1992). To each of them he posed the same question: “Does Latin America exist?” After the cast of Spanish and Portuguese conquerors, colonizers, missionaries, and settlers had shaped the foundational *imaginaire* in a daunting corpus of chronicles spanning well over three centuries (1493–1819), recording events and customs while naming in the process fauna, flora, and some musical practices and instruments for which the foreign observers had no names, a new image of the vast territorial expanse between Patagonia and Mexico erupted upon the stage of history, this time credited to France. “Did you know that this business of ‘latina’ in América latina was not of our making?” says Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes to Marras in one of the most provocative interviews. “No, it is nothing less than a French invention, like so many others: la Bardot, the *négligé*, cognac, the corset, and the *ménage à trois*. *L’Amérique latine* [a monolithic abstraction] is, in fact, the invention of Michel Chevalier (1806–1879), the French ideologue of a panlatinism conceived to justify France’s ambitions in the *Territoires d’Outre-Mer*.” Specifically, this image was forged to further the political expansionism of Napoleon III (1808–1873), which materialized in the short-lived imposition of an Austrian emperor on Mexico (1864–1867) when President Benito Juárez defaulted on Mexico’s foreign debt. Needless to say, “Maximilian was promptly shot down by a few soldiers who dispatched him in less time than the fastest rooster in Querétaro could crow, leaving poor María Carlota of Belgium a widow at the age of twenty-six” (Fuentes in Marras 1992: 15).

Michel Chevalier was a “communicator,” continues Fuentes, not unlike those “brainstorming around a table at transnational corporations,” where imaging is both reactive to existing preconceptions and active in carving a place for a new registered label (a *marca registrada* or *marque déposée*). The process of naming was seldom arbitrary in the New World. Columbus appears to have followed a

hierarchical order in his baptisms, which corresponded successively to the Christian Savior, the Virgin Mary, the King and Queen of Spain, and the Royal Princess, when he called the first island he sighted San Salvador “in honor of His Heavenly Majesty who wondrously has given us all this,” although he was aware that the Indians called it Guanahani; then Santa María de Concepción, Fernandina, Isabella, and Juana (“Letter to Santángel,” February–March 1493). Because “things must have the names that correspond to them . . . , this obligation plunged Columbus into a veritable naming frenzy” wherein he appropriated the right to name as a form of taking possession of the “virgin world” unfolding before his eyes. Thus he named mountains, rivers, and capes by direct resemblance to elements in nature (like Islas de Arena, or islands of sand; and Cabo de Palmas, or cape of palm trees), and settlements after symbols of “his” world. These “acts of extended nomination” did not spare the Indians, as “the first men brought back to Spain were rebaptized Don Juan de Castilla and Don Fernando de Aragón” (Todorov 1984: 27–28). On occasion, the process of naming took the form of mistranslation, as in the case of the Yucatan Peninsula, according to a story that Tzvetan Todorov relishes, but does not substantiate. It appears that, to the shouts of the first Spaniards landing on the peninsula, Mayans responded with “Ma c’ubah than” (We do not understand your words), which the Spaniards heard as “Yucatan” and assumed it to be the name of the place (1984: 99). Todorov himself, so “sensitized to the misdeeds of European colonialism” by his own account (1984: 58) and relentless in his representation of Columbus as impervious to human alterity, seems to have accepted uncritically the French “invention” of an *Amérique latine* (1984: 49–50):

The entire history of the discovery of America, the first episode of the Conquest, is marked by this ambiguity: human alterity is at once revealed and rejected. The year 1492 already symbolizes, in the history of Spain, this double movement: in this same year [Spain] repudiated its interior Other by triumphing over the Moors in the final battle of Granada and by forcing the Jews to leave its territory; and it discovered the exterior Other, that whole America that would become *Latin* [my emphasis].

Amused by the concept that Chevalier tossed into the ideological market of the Western hemisphere’s fledgling nations, Carlos Fuentes embellishes on the success of the French enterprise:

The title suited us, *criollos* and mestizos, because we needed to distance ourselves from such traditional hispanophilic labels as Hispanoamérica or Iberoamérica, not only because our Motherland had fallen into global disrepute, but also because we had rebelled against her and were obstinate in our resolve to assert our differences and walk our own path. Moreover, we already suspected that the simple geographic term “América del Sur” would not protect us, because the United States already was seriously claiming “America” for itself, as it took possession of parts of Mexico and Caribbean islands in a voracious rush to plunder the remaining spoils. We could not but smile at this ingenious turn . . . toward a “latinidad” that turned us overnight into honorary French citizens. I am not going to criticize monsieur Chevalier because he did his thing rather well, so well, in fact, that we still believe in this tale (Fuentes in Marras 1992: 17).

Of course, the story would have been different if the reversal of history in *Mare nostrum: Discovery, Pacification, and Conversion of the Mediterranean Region by a Tribe from the Amazon* (Berlin, 1975) by Mauricio Kagel (1931–2008) had been more than a flight of fancy for his brand of experimental music theater or an expression of subliminal Desire (Kuss 1991: 10).

As for the much-berated colossus of the North, it appears that it narrowly escaped the fate of being called “Freedonia,” or “Land of the Free,” when this name was discarded after the communicators wrestling to find the right image received a letter alerting them that “donia” or “Doña” meant “woman” in Spanish, and thus Freedonia could be interpreted as “The Land of Free Women.” (“Freedonia” survives in a map by R. H. Laurie published in London in 1830 and updated in 1832, 1833, 1834, 1836, and 1849.) Columbia or Colombia also was considered, but by then it had been snatched by the legendary Simón Bolívar (1783–1830) for the newly independent Viceroyalty of New Granada which, comprising Venezuela, New Granada (present-day Colombia and Panama), and Ecuador, was renamed Republic of Colombia in 1819 and is known as Gran Colombia to distinguish it from the smaller modern Colombia after the short-lived confederation disintegrated in 1830. Writing in 1962 about unity and diversity in “The Four Americas”—namely Indo-Spanish America, Portuguese America (Brazil), English America (the United States), and Anglo-French America (Canada)—the distinguished and controversial Colombian historian and statesman Germán Arciniegas (1900–1999) argued that the United States is the only country in the world which does not have a name. “There are other confederations in the Americas, like the United States of Mexico, the United States of Venezuela, and the United States of Brazil. The philosophers gathered in Philadelphia to draw up the constitution ... did not think of giving the new state a name of its own. To say ‘United States’ is like saying federation, republic, or monarchy” (Arciniegas 1962 in Hanke 1964: 237–38). By default and abbreviation, then, the nameless United States of America, not unlike Mexico, Venezuela, and Brazil, became just simply “America.”

The question of whether “Latin America exists” addresses not the fact that the French invention is a misnomer, because neither Native Americans nor Africans and their descendants are “Latin,” but when and at what levels cultural insiders identify with this act of utopian reductionism. When confronted with the question of why his literature did not contain a “Latin American or Latin Americanist coloration,” the Argentinian Juan José Saer (1937–2005), who has been called one of the greatest living writers in the Spanish language, responded: “Of course not, because I am not a Latin American, I am Argentinian. To be ‘Latin American’ is an abstraction; it is like saying ‘I am European.’ If I wrote like [the Mexican] Juan Rulfo, everybody would laugh at me. The language of a writer is ‘maternal’ in the broadest sense of the term, it is a language etched in many emotional elements. For a writer, language is essentially polysemic and connotative, namely the opposite of a metalanguage” (1987). Scores of cosmopolitan composers, who barely tolerate this form of extraversion, would identify with this statement. The tropification of stereotypes, or discourse centered on whether a “Latin Americanness” shines through (as in the question posed to Juan José Saer), also is replicated at the national level. When Aaron Copland visited seven South American countries on behalf of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs in 1941 and reported his impressions in an often-quoted article published a year later in *Modern Music*, he found it necessary to explain to an apparently uninformed U.S. audience that “lumping” was not such a good thing:

To see the field of composition as it actually is down there we should of course stop thinking in terms of The South American Composer. No such person exists. South America, as we are often told but never seem fully to comprehend, is a collection of separate countries, each with independent traditions. Their musical developments are various and there is little or no musical contact between them. Brazilian, Colombian,

Peruvian composers are just as different from each other as are Dutch, Hungarian, or Yugoslav composers. European music covers a lot of territory, and so also does South American (Copland 1942: 75).

Copland did not go far enough in his well-intentioned attempt to eradicate stereotypes, and he himself would have objected if his compositional poetics had been lumped together with Milton Babbitt's or Charles Ives' in the service of constructing the national myth or politico-cultural masterstory. If "The Latin American Composer" is a monolithic abstraction that obliterates national differences, "The National Composer" submerges and obliterates individual poetics. The former is a product of the discourse of difference stemming mostly from cultural outsiders; the latter feeds the tropification or construction of discourses on the politico-cultural national myth; and both contribute to the construction of stereotypes. Lodged in conceptual frameworks developed by German music historiography to marginalize and subordinate compositional aesthetics deemed antithetical to the canonized metaphysics of purely instrumental music in the nineteenth century (Dahlhaus 1974; Fischer 1979), the tropification of "nationalism" is one of the most glaring examples of self-colonized and colonialist discourse (Kuss 1998). Composer Marlos Nobre (1939–2024) settled this core issue in response to one of those banal questions based on expectations of exoticism at a festival and conference held at Fort Worth's Texas Christian University in 2000: "I am Brazilian; I write music; I do not write Brazilian music." The same can be applied to scores of composers and particularly to the poetics of Alberto Ginastera (1916–1983). In "El escritor argentino y la tradición" (1932 in 1974: 270), Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986), whose cosmopolitan literature was not immune to the same expectations of "explicit Latin Americanness" as Saer's, once wrote that "The Argentinian cult of local color is a recent European cult that nationalists should reject for its foreignness" ("El culto argentino del color local es un reciente culto europeo que los nacionalistas deberían rechazar for foráneo").

The implications of a concept frivolously conceived and often stereotypically applied, however, merged with the idea of a community of nations and established an interplay between frequently insurmountable national differences and utopian commonalities. Long before our "Latinidad" was fabricated in France, the Venezuelan Simón Bolívar had envisioned "the most immense, or most extraordinary, or most invincible league of nations the world had ever seen" after solidifying Peru's independence in 1826 (García Márquez 1989 in 1991: 74). His thwarted dream of integrating the fledgling American nations into a free and powerful single republic spanning from Mexico to Patagonia is the overriding theme in *The General in His Labyrinth* by the Colombian recipient of the 1982 Nobel Prize in Literature. "He had wrested from Spanish domination an empire five times more vast than all of Europe, he had led twenty years of wars to keep it free and united, and he had governed it with a firm hand ..." until 1830, the year of the General's last journey chosen by Gabriel García Márquez to weave his masterful web of historical fiction (1989 in 1991: 37). The foundational interplay between commonalities and differences in the early nineteenth century took the shape of an attempted redemption in the utopian dream of continental unity, which, conceived as a strategy to fence off the European Holy Alliance of the 1820s and face the increasingly powerful Anglo-America in the North, also could defeat internal anarchy, the new enemy of the fledgling republics. While the Bolivarian dream survives in the present-day Organization of American States, the figure of the Liberator remains

firmly entrenched in the domain of myth. As historian David Bushnell put it, Bolívar “has been claimed as a precursor by every ideological current from the revolutionary Left to the extreme Right There is something about Bolívar to appeal to every taste and every age” (Hanke and Rausch 1999: 3; Bierck, Jr. 1999: 11).

Historically, an identification with the idea of a community of nations forged from within has been in constant flux and gains strength and substance at specific junctures. In the words of the revered U.S. historian Lewis Hanke, “There are moments of universal agony, of crisis, in which histories of continents [or countries] join hands to survive in the great tests with which are measured the characters of men and the vigour of their faith” (1964: 235). Few historical intersections validated the existence of a bond between Latin American nations as did, for instance, the sociopolitical movement that soared throughout the 1960s and 1970s giving tangible shape to rebellion against tyranny, dictatorships, and social injustice in the *Nueva canción latinoamericana*. Prefigured in folklore revivals of the 1950s, the voices of *cantautores* (singers-authors)—such as the Chileans Violeta Parra (1917–1967) and Víctor Jara (b. 1938—assassinated in Santiago de Chile, September 16, 1973), Argentínians Atahualpa Yupanki (1908–1992) and Mercedes Sosa (1935–2009), Brazilians Geraldo Vandré (b. 1935) and Chico Buarque (Francisco Buarque de Holanda, b. 1944), Nicaraguans Carlos Mejía Godoy (b. 1943) and his brother Luis Enrique Mejía Godoy (b. 1945), Uruguayans Alfredo Zitarrosa (1936–1989) and Daniel Viglietti (1939–2017), Mexicans Judith Reyes (1924–1988) and Oscar Chávez (1935–2020), Peruvians Tania Libertad (b. 1952) and Nicomedes Santa Cruz (1925–1992), and Venezuelans Lilia Vera (b. 1951) and Soledad Bravo (b. 1943) among so many others—carried the plight of voices suppressed by repressive regimes throughout the continent, spreading it at home and abroad well into the 1980s. The idea of a community of nations singing with one voice validated in this instance the substance of Latin America’s existence.

HISTORICAL FICTIONS AND FICTIONAL HISTORIES

In “Questions of Conquest: What Columbus wrought and what he did not,” the Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa calls the early chroniclers “the first Magical Realists The chronicles of Conquest form an astonishingly rich literature—a literature at once fantastical and true. Through these books we can rediscover a period and a place, much as the readers of contemporary Latin American fiction discover the contemporary life of a continent” (1990: 46). The fables constructed by the chroniclers, at once fantastical yet not confined to the domain of fiction, are the foundational writings that set the course of America’s being in history. They are foundational because, by naming for the first time realities for which the namers had no names—and wherein naming becomes an art of approximation or translation—they mark a historical chasm, a rupture with the familiar that casts the past into an ontological void (González Echevarría 2006). In turn, this void obsesses history with questions of origins and concomitant fixations with identity. The “invented” historical being of America (forged by the European imagination after its own image) (O’Gorman 1961) took place in the domain of discourse, and, initially, in the discourse of the chronicles. This corpus of letters, reports, diaries, and

historical narratives spans from Columbus' letter to Luis de Santángel of February 1493 (González Echevarría 1990 in 1998: 43) to the early 19th-century writings of the Spaniard Diego de Alvear (1749–1830), respectively the first and last entries in Francisco Esteve Barba's monumental *Historiografía Indiana* (1964), the most comprehensive roadmap to chronicles from "discovery" (1492) to the birth of nations.

The fact that some writers of fiction would turn to the discourse of chronicles verging on myth in canonic works of contemporary literature to define a poetics of history that defies verification, paradoxically validates them beyond the empirical level summoned by most scholars searching for historical certitudes of the verifiable variety. Most of all, the observations and events recorded in the chronicles, their multiple lines of transmission, and the utopias they catalyzed in the course of their European reception (as in the case of Garcilaso de la Vega's *Comentarios reales de los Incas* [1609] [Montiel 1992 and 2000]), constructed an *imaginaire* whose domain is neither temporal history nor atemporal myth—two domains that Europeans have kept safely apart (Kuss 2001 and 2005). Built on the discourse of difference, this *imaginaire* became as much a scaffolding for America's being in history as cathedrals superimposed on submerged Aztec temples—as is the case in Mexico City—became a part of the skyline of colonial cities.

Western epistemological orders traveled with conquerors, colonizers, and settlers, and later on with explorers and scientists in the nineteenth century, building and superimposing layers of discursive modalities through which Americans themselves would represent their own being in history. This led Tzvetan Todorov, who made the most of linguistic dis-encounters in his influential *The Conquest of America: The Question of The Other* (1984), to imply that America was not conquered by swords but by a mastery of language, or control of signs. The entrenched European belief in the superiority of written expression (verbal and musical) surfaces already in the foundational *Relación* of the Ur-cronista Fray Ramón Pané (1498 in 1991), a Catalan entrusted by Columbus to record in Spanish information on myths told to him by the Indians of Hispaniola in a branch of Arawakan, who, according to Todorov, repeats that, "Since the Indians have neither alphabet nor writing, they do not speak their myths clearly, and it is impossible for me to transcribe them correctly" (1984: 41). As a storehouse of images and versions of events seen from the start through the lens of the foreign observer, the foundational *imaginaire* mirrored epistemological orders in "perfected histories" written to fit a variety of objectives, while submerging ways of knowing that did not conform with the linear logic of European thought under layers of superimposed Western modes of representation (in an imaginary archaeology of discourses). The chroniclers themselves were not of one mind and often projected contradictory perspectives. Among them are the historically untrained conqueror/soldier who recorded firsthand observations; the friar committed to redeeming the oppressed Indian; the serene, apparently non-biased pioneer ethnographer who relied on our first "informants"; the classically trained humanist; the colonized Indian; the erudite mestizo; and the armchair historian filtering primary and secondary sources to fulfill the tasks of Crown-appointed official Cronista Mayor de Indias (1572–ca. 1793) (Esteve Barba 1964: 8–10, 112–36). Discourse, not praxis, forced a historical experience and

representations of the exuberant creativity it spawned into a procrustean bed whose implications for musicology (broadly defined) remain to be exorcised.

Five centuries later, self-awareness and the assimilation of texts that blazed a liberating trail (especially Edmundo O’Gorman’s *The Invention of America: An inquiry into the historical nature of the New World and the meaning of its history* [1961] [Kuss 1993]) have catalyzed a flurry of creative scholarship in a number of disciplines that submit the received conceptual frameworks and their concomitant discursive modalities to critical scrutiny. Confining ourselves only to Peru as an instance, it is important to note that some of the paradigmatic texts generated within a more generalized movement of postcolonial revisionism have been driven by a need to heal fractured national identities and finally assimilate the trauma of Conquest, which is still an open wound in Andean countries and emblematic of current social struggles. Written by Peruvians to understand and sublimate their own historical experience, these texts are not addressed to the foreign consumer (extraversion) but directed inwards. For instance, in *Entre el mito y la historia* (Hernández, Lemlij, Millones, Péndola, and Rostworowski 1987), ethnohistorians and psychologists engage in “archaeological” efforts to rescue patterns of Andean thought (see also Luis Millones, “The Death of Atahualpa” in *Musical Repercussions of 1492: Encounters in Text and Performance*, 1992: 237–256); in *Memoria del bien perdido: Conflicto, identidad y nostalgia en el Inca Garcilaso de la Vega* (1993), Max Hernández probes the subtending integrity of a universalist project while painting an intimate psychoanalytical portrait of the mestizo who wrote the vastly read *Comentarios reales de los Incas* (1609) to recover and reconstruct his conflictual identity (see also González Echevarría 1990 in 1998: 43–92); and in *Del paganismo a la santidad: La incorporación de los indios del Perú al catolicismo, 1532–1750* (2003), historian Juan Carlos Estenssoro Fuchs rescues the quest of Indians to be recognized as Christians, exposing the strategies of colonial power to perpetuate the myth of resistance in order to maintain a marginalized class that itself defined and ensured the perpetuity of the colonial structure, while challenging the entrenched essentialist view of generalized resistance to conversion by a static indigenous society incapable of change. Critical editions and re-readings of canonic texts also have proliferated. Among them, few are as paradigmatic as Rolena Adorno’s reading of native-born Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala’s *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (1615) as a comprehensive critique of colonialist discourse on religion, political theory, and history (1986 in 2000), as well as her critical coedition of this text with John V. Murra (Guamán Poma de Ayala 1615 in 1980).

To the vibrancy and integrity that this research communicates and the potentially inexhaustible lines of inquiry it suggests, we must add literary criticism, and, specifically, the work of Roberto González Echevarría, whose essay on “Latin American fiction and the poetics of history” sets the tone for any inquiry into the paradoxical encounters and dis-encounters that characterize the region’s historiography <https://islandsofhistory.org/volume-3/latin-american-fiction-and-the-poetics-of-history/>. The vigor of post-colonial studies in a number of disciplines, however, has yet to emerge with the same generalized conviction from musicological quarters (Kuss 1993, 1998, 2005). Only a relatively small number of scholars are shaking the belief in the supremacy assigned to the entrenched masterstory defined by European- and, more recently, U.S.-centric frames of reference.

Musicology's relative isolation from contemporary criticism in the field of Latin American Studies begs one of the most important questions in postcolonial thought, best formulated by V.Y. Mudimbe in *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (1988). Published by the same press that brought out Edmundo O'Gorman's *The Invention of America* seventeen years earlier, Mudimbe's work scrutinizes "processes of transformation of types of knowledge" and "interrogates images of Africa":

Western interpreters as well as African analysts have been using categories and conceptual systems which depend on a Western epistemological order. Even in the most explicitly "Afrocentric" descriptions, models of analysis explicitly or implicitly, knowingly or unknowingly, refer to the same order. Does this mean that ... African traditional systems of thought are unthinkable and cannot be made explicit within the framework of their own rationality? My own claim is that, thus far, the ways in which they have been evaluated and the means used to explain them relate to theories and methods whose constraints, rules, and systems of operation suppose a non-African epistemological order (1988: x).

The questions this text raises and the foundations it jolts are echoed in Kofi Agawu's "The Invention of 'African Rhythm'" (1995) and in his polemical book, *Representing African Music: Postcolonial notes, queries, positions* (2003), whose "Introduction"—with a substitution of terms and names—could easily argue our case. At a metalevel, these "virtual cultures" share a similar predicament: no matter how culture-specific and profoundly different the processes by which these *imaginaires* were constructed, each has affected how members of these cultures represent themselves. As the Indiano says to Filomeno in Alejo Carpentier's *Concierto barroco* (1974: 76) when they part in a Venice train station after their adventure in "time" (defined as the substance of rhythm and history): "Sometimes it is necessary to see things from afar, even with an ocean in between, to see them up close" ("*A veces es necesario alejarse de las cosas, poner un mar de por medio, para ver las cosas de cerca*").

HISTORY AS AESTHETIC CONSTRUCT

The mythological dimensions of Latin America's history, prefigured in the chronicles but not limited to their timespan, compel writers to turn to history for the themes of their fiction and seize larger-than-life heroes or villains (as in the portrayals of Bolívar by García Márquez in *The General in His Labyrinth* [1989 in 1991], and of the Dominican Republic's dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina [1891–1961] by Mario Vargas Llosa in *The Feast of the Goat* [2000 in 2001]), or to mythological cycles of colossal proportions (as in García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* [1967 in 1970], and Carlos Fuentes' *Terra nostra* [1975 in 1976]). The fact that reality can be more surreal than fiction also feeds an innate proclivity to mythologize it. In the speech he delivered when he received the Nobel Prize in 1982, García Márquez observed that "Independence from Spanish dominion did not spare us from insanity. General Antonio López de Santa Anna, three-time dictator of Mexico, staged magnificent funerals for the left leg he had lost in the so-called Guerra de los Pasteles (1983: 1).

From the perspective of a canonic corpus of contemporary literature as interpreted by González Echevarría in “Latin American fiction and the poetics of history,” history then becomes fulfilled poetic prophecy. He writes:

Modern Latin American novelists obsessively turn to Latin American history as source because they find there the prolegomena of their narrative art—what comes first, how events determine each other, how causality works, who are the heroes and villains. History becomes in the works of Latin American novelists an *artistic construct* whose truth is aesthetic, rather than documentary or factual, and, more often than not, runs counter to official histories found in textbooks and government pronouncements.

With different words, García Márquez expressed a similar thought in a famous dictum: “If historians have written fiction, it befalls us, the writers of fiction, to write the history” (“Si los historiadores han hecho ficción, me parece natural que los escritores de ficción hagamos la historia”). Aesthetic constructs override “official histories” because the latter served to construct powerfully political fictions whose colonizing purpose defined a conquest by mastery of [written] language, or control of signs. Always more precocious than musicology, literary criticism offered us thirty-five years ago a perfect formulation of this historical predicament:

The New World occupies a doubly fictive place: the one furnished by the European tradition, and the one re-elaborated by Latin American writers [and composers]. Writing within a Western tradition and in a European language, Latin American writers [and composers] feel they write from within a fiction of which they are a part, and, in order to escape from this literary [or musical] encirclement, they must constantly strive to invent themselves and Latin America anew (González Echevarría 1977 in 1990: 28).

Mastering the code becomes then a way out of the “imperialism of context” (*Ibid.*, 29).

Few have mastered the code or captured the dialogue between versions of history and the interplay of forces driving the structure of constraint, imitation, and subversion that shaped musical creativity in Latin America with more command of history as an aesthetic construct than Alejo Carpentier (1904–1980) in *Concierto barroco* (1974), his most musical of fictions. In this novella, the towering figure of Cuban letters—who also wore the hats of music critic (1980), amateur ethnographer (1933 in 1979), music historiographer (1946), opera librettist (1931), and cultural critic (1977)—celebrates the coexistence of musical traditions that shape an incongruent whole through the metaphor of a Haendelian/Vivaldian baroque concerto grosso disrupted by an African drumming that “does not fit,” defying any received model of historical organicism or any attempt at cultural definition. In his masterful critical study of Carpentier’s *oeuvre* (1977 in 1990), González Echevarría defines *Concierto barroco* (1973) as

A contradiction in terms, for the idea of harmony implied by “concert” is undermined by that of disorder and heterogeneity suggested by “baroque.” The central scene in the novel—when Handel, Scarlatti, Vivaldi, the girls of the Ospedale della Pietà, and the Mexican traveler and his Black Cuban servant join together in a cacophonous “fantastic symphony”—is the baroque concert, the indiscriminate fusion of European, American, classical, and popular elements, as well as of instruments of the most varied origins, to produce a new music, a new conglomerate in which there need be no synthesis

Rather than “the autonomy of Latin American culture that Carpentier pursued in earlier writings,” wherein identity assumes the character of a fusion, as in *lo real maravilloso* / the marvelous real in his

only libretto (1931) for the paradigmatic Cuban composer Alejandro García Caturla [1934]) (Kuss 1992, 2011, and 2022), in *Concierto barroco* he “demonstrates the dialectics of dependence and independence that subtend any effort at cultural definition” (1977 in 1990: 266, 274). Latin America was postmodern before the age of postmodernism.

The wealth of mythologies that conditioned our “being in history” also conditions the search for the poetics of history in aesthetic constructs, both literary and musical. Transmutations of the foundational *imaginaire* are summoned not only in contemporary fiction but also define the very essence of a brand of creativity capable of transmuting the 16th-century French *contredanse* into tango and Anton Webern’s *Symphony*, Op. 21 (1928) into Ginastera’s “Interludio fantástico” (IV) from his *Cantata para América mágica* (1960) (Kuss 2000). Interpreting the poetics of history as an aesthetic construct demands challenging the basic tenets of the holy writ, namely the value-laden concepts of history shaped by Europeans and those within their gravitational field (see, for instance, Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht’s masterful summary of approaches to European history [1980: VIII, 592–600]). It also demands abrogating the political imperative of assigning truth to the process of verification through the written document and claiming oral histories as a part of its domain (as Luis Millones does in “The ‘Other’ History: Provincial Reflections on the Discovery of America,” a recovery of what he calls “parallel histories” in Peru [1985]). Moreover, it demands thinking of cultures as interdependent and fluid wholes, instead of—as anthropologist Eric R. Wolf put it brilliantly—“turning names into things by endowing nations and cultures with the qualities of internally homogeneous and externally bounded objects, thus creating a model of the world as a global pool hall in which the entities spin off each other like so many hard and round billiard balls, leading to the conception of a monolithic West counterposed to a monolithic East, both reified categories that interfere with our ability to understand their mutual encounter and confrontation” (1982: 6). In *Europe and the People Without History*, Wolf argues that we have created intellectual instruments (names that turn concepts into “things” = culture, society, nation) leading to the construction of static models that isolate phenomena, but have not yet devised instruments to name the changing interrelatedness that involves all agents of history, not only the predilect victors or carriers of torches of liberty (1982: 5–7; Kuss 1991: 3). A history that assigns the same value to all traditions and is defined by a heterogeneity “of which there need be no synthesis” and by an infinite number of intersections of time, place, and peoples, only can be served by a neutral model of history, such as Wolf formulated in his aforementioned work: “A web of temporally and spatially changing and changeable set of relationships, or relationships among sets of relationships” (1982: 6). We adopt this non-value-laden grid for our history of this region’s musics (Kuss 2004 and 2007, also <https://www.islandsofhistory.org>, an Online Museum of Performance Traditions in progress [2025]).

Analyzing modalities of discourse (*d’après* Foucault) in paradigmatic narratives inclusive of writings that “literature proper” would exclude, González Echevarría tells us that the history of the Latin American novel has been told in various ways. The following statement captures a predicament that easily can be applied to the music historiography of Latin America:

No matter what method the historian employs, the blueprint of evolution and change continues to be that of European literary or artistic historiography Ordinary categories like romanticism, naturalism, the avant-garde, surface sooner or later. If it is questionable that this historiographic grid is applicable to European literature, it is even more so regarding the literature of Latin America It is a hopeless task to force texts such as these into a conventional history of the Latin American novel (1990 in 1998: 38–39).

Likewise, when musicologists apply regulative concepts devised by Europeans for the European experience to compositions by Latin Americans —the simplest example of which is the indiscriminate transfer of style-period labels and/or aesthetic movements—they are dooming one historical experience and concomitant aesthetics to representation through the discursive modalities of another. If European-affiliated compositional techniques and procedures created analogies, links, and transformations of the European legacy, these intersections are not homological: the primordial condition of being in history through the discourse of difference subverted aesthetic results (Kuss 1990 and 2005).

In *Myth and Archive: A theory of Latin American narrative* (1990 in 1998), González Echevarría accomplishes a monumental task: by analyzing modalities of discourse—rather than patterns of evolution and change supported by the scaffolding of facts of conventional historiography—he arrives at a reformulation of historical categories that are culture-specific. Working retrospectively from the modalities of discourse recovered in modern fictions, he identifies three epochs, each characterized by the pervasiveness of a different discursive modality—or period rhetorics—and by the structure of constraint, imitation, and subversion. These modalities, however, are relieved of their historicity when they reappear accumulated or stored in the modern Latin American narrative he calls the “archival fiction” (*d’après* Foucault) of the fourth epoch. Assigning the role of founder of archival fiction to Carpentier in *The Lost Steps* (1953 in 1956), whose narrator/protagonist is a composer, García Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967 in 1970) stands as its archetype and Jorge Luis Borges as its guardian (1990 in 1998: 1–42).

The synchronic presence of de-historicized discourses defines history retrospectively, as a reconstruction of the past in the present (Treitler 1989a and 1989b) and reaches beyond Latin America’s archival fiction. The year 1967 suggests a broader “confluence of historical coordinates,” Carpentier’s metaphor for the elusive predicament of the region’s musics (1977). In this particular intersection converge not only the publication of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the advent of archival compositions such as Alberto Ginastera’s *Bomarzo* and Luciano Berio’s *Sinfonia* (1968–69 [*O King*, 1967]), and an expanded revision of Umberto Eco’s *Opera aperta: Forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee*, but also Foucault’s dialogue with Raymond Bellour wherein he lends a shape to the figure of the “Archive,” published under the title “On the Ways of Writing History” (1967 in 1999: 289–90):

Bellour: How do you situate yourself personally in this mutation that draws the most rigorous works of knowledge into a kind of literary adventure (*an aventure romanesque*)?

Foucault: Unlike those who are labeled “structuralists,” I am not really interested in the formal possibilities afforded by a system such as language. Personally, I am more intrigued by the existence of

discourses, by the fact that words were spoken. Those events functioned in relation to their original situation, they left traces behind them, they continue to exist, and they exercise, in their submerged subsistence in history, a certain number of manifest or secret functions.

Bellour: In that way, you surrender to the characteristic passion of the historian, who wants to respond to the endless murmur of the archives.

Foucault: Yes, because my object is not language but the archive, which is to say, the accumulated existence of discourses. Archaeology, as I understand it, is not akin either to geology (as the analysis of substrata) or to genealogy (as the description of beginnings and successions); it is the analysis of discourse in its archival modality.

Mastering the hegemonic code—divested of its hierarchies, values, and contextual meanings—to invert its signs and turn the received discourses into a fiction is then the way out of “the imperialism of context.” Moreover, this strategy reverses the terms of the foundational *imaginaire* and balances the asymmetry of the initial historical predicament. Antithetical to the masterstory, the Archive, or de-historicized accumulation of discourses, is neither hegemonic nor does it canonize:

Mythification is a version of the masterstory of escape from the strictures of the dominant discourse through fusion with one of the main objects of that discourse: myth. Heterogeneity of cultures, languages, sources, beginnings, is at the core of the Archive’s founding negativity, a pluralism that is a subversion or sub-version of the masterstory. The Archive culls and looses, it cannot brand or determine. The Archive cannot coalesce as a national or cultural myth, though its make-up still reveals a longing for the creation of such a grandiose politico-cultural metastory (González Echevarría 1990 in 1998: 175).

If a center of gravity of modern culture in Latin America exists at all, it belongs as much to the visions projected by Carpentier as it does to Borges because, for the latter, it was never a question of rejecting the legacy of the West but rather embracing it in its totality to reorder its signs and turn it into a fiction. When Borges turns his encyclopedia of Western knowledge on its head, divesting it of its culture-specific contexts of interpretation, he cancels out its meanings to map out infinite possibilities of different associations, presenting “a vision of a place where all other places intersect” (Parks 2001: 42). Such reorderings of the legacy of the West require an *a priori* act of possession, a “mastery of the code” (González Echevarría 1977 in 1990: 29), without which there is no possibility of escaping the epigonic fate of the original predetermination (the “invention” of America as a replica of Europe). Mastery of the code to then decode and elicit multiple new readings that turn *the received culture into a fiction* by inversion of signs demands a critical attitude toward its legacy and its systems of explanation. Borges challenges the limits of this idea in “Pierre Menard, autor del *Quijote*” (1938 in 1974: 444–50) when its fictive author—an *absence*—reproduces his source *verbatim* to elicit the reading of a totally different work, not by “copying” the original but by “coming to the story *through the experience of Pierre Menard*” (Parks 2001: 41). In 20th-century music theater, the Borgean idea of appropriation and reordering surfaces in *Bomarzo* (1967), the second opera by Alberto Ginastera (1916–1983) based on the homonymous novel (1962) and libretto by Manuel Mujica Láinez (1910–1984) (Kuss 1984, 1987b, 2002, and 2005). If the figure of the Archive, as defined by González Echevarría in his theory of Latin American narrative, is at once Library, Encyclopedia, History, and Sediment, the fiction that the *grotteschi* in Bomarzo’s gardens suggested to Mujica Láinez subsumes all

of these and takes possession of the Renaissance to invert its signs and reterritorialize it from the 20th-century perspective of a contemporary Pier Francesco Orsini, Duke of Bomarzo, as Borges reterritorializes Cervantes in “Pierre Menard.” In *Bomarzo*, Ginastera aligns himself with the fiction that Borges inaugurates in 1938 with “Pierre Menard,” wherein mastery of the code becomes the tool to strip the embraced culture of its hierarchies, values, and meanings and thus turn the legacy of the West into a fiction that reverses the terms of the foundational *imaginaire*. (The composer was well aware of this strategy: when I started working on *Bomarzo* four decades ago, he said to me with a big smile, “Don’t forget to read ‘Pierre Menard’.”)

Each point of intersection in our relational web d’après Wolf defines different sets of relationships among the traditions involved. This value-free, cybernetic metaphor for history as a web of multileveled intersections of time, place, and peoples is not only inclusive of all traditions, but also accommodates hegemonic modalities of musical discourse or “period rhetorics,” each with its respective strategies of subversion, as well as “archival” composition, namely the synchronic accumulation of discourses that defines modernity, which, as stated above, is not hegemonic (González Echevarría 1990 in 1998: 175). Within this neutral meta-framework, however, each intersection or nodal point represents an interplay of culturally value-laden factors. Viewed as an Archive of intra-histories, each unfolding at its own pace, what Columbus wrought for Europe was the fulfillment of *another set of cultural possibilities*, “defined within and yet against a powerful totality” (González Echevarría). Rather than the West and the rest, the rearticulation of values in the acts of adoption, assimilation, and subversion relativizes certainties and challenges borders of a once sacrosanct space, implicitly de-centering it and irreverently breeding criteria for its critique (i.e., Latin American “culture” as mirror and critique of its tributaries). The regulative concepts of the hegemonic grid have been critically scrutinized by some enlightened Europeans (Fischer 1979; Finscher 1986–1987) and challenged, more or less irreverently, by scholars in the United States (Treitler 1989a and 1989b; Tomlinson 1995), to mention but a few. Musicologists specializing in Latin America are beginning to dismantle the tenacious hold of colonialist and self-colonized discourse. However, a culture-specific theory of “musical discourses” mediated by analysis and engendered by the terms of its own rationality, comparable to González Echevarría’s theory of Latin American narrative, still lies dormant, waiting to be “discovered” by musicologists.

The volumes that comprise our collaborative “encyclopedia history” are, by necessity, eclectic. We have not imposed theories of culture or history on the work of our authors, but intentionally embrace the multiplicity of approaches and perspectives that mirrors a broad range of differences in traditions of scholarship and training. There is, however, a subtending agenda, beyond the hope of stimulating research on a vast array of gaps. We believe that the unprecedented coverage of musical traditions in Latin America and the Caribbean in these volumes, which adheres to the principle that these have to be studied at the local level, can contribute in some measure to the eradication of essentialisms and to critical reassessments of the infinite ways in which cultural representation still relies on criteria and conceptual frameworks developed within the Eurocentric sphere of influence, including some models of cultural criticism stemming from vastly different historical experiences.

OUR "CULTURAL ADVENTURE"

... Son tantos los hilos
ausentes
en toda urdimbre o toda
trama,
que con ellos alcanza
en algún otro espacio
para un tejido completamtn
diferente ...

Toda historia, toda explicación,
todo discurso,
son figuras trazadas por un
momento en el aire,
formas a la deriva
que se enrollan a veces
transitoriamente
en el perfil un poco más
discreto
de una rama seca.

... So many are the absent
strands
in every scheme or every
web,
that with them we would
have enough,
in some other space,

to weave another utterly
different net ...

Each history, explanation,
or discourse,
is a transient figure traced
in the air,
forms adrift
that sometimes curl for
a while
around the less ambitious
shape
of a seared branch.

—Fragments from “Poesía vertical” by Roberto Juárez, cited in Lelia Madrid’s *La fundación mitológica de América Latina* (1989: 19) (my translation).

The volumes on this *Online Museum of Performance Traditions* are structured as parts of a single conception and gather contributions by well over one hundred distinguished scholars from thirty-six countries. In addition, the work includes approximately 30 hours of recorded sound and bibliographies that amount to a nearly comprehensive history of writings in the fields of Latin American and Caribbean music studies to 2007.

VOLUME 1, *Performing Beliefs: Indigenous Peoples of South America, Central America, and Mexico*, focuses on the inextricable relationships between worldviews and musical behavior in current and relatively recent practices of Indigenous groups. Worldviews are built into how music is organized and performed, how musical instruments are constructed and when they are played, choreographic formations, the structure of songs, the assignment of gender to instruments, ritual patterns, and so on. Every essay in this volume addresses different levels at which this principle is manifested. Within this context, music is mostly an essential form of energy, a kinetic and transformative vessel that communicates with ancestors and the supernatural, heals, manipulates the forces of nature, bonds communities, or reenacts social tensions. The bridges cannot be crossed without the transformative power of music (or sound). Essays on fundamental concepts underpinning secular and religious practices of Indigenous groups (“Native Peoples: Introductory Panorama”; “Myth, Cosmology, and Performance”; “Music and Healing”; and “Epilogue,” all by Carol E. Robertson) articulate a framework for surveys mapping traditional practices of Native Americans in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. In the case of Mexico, an overview of linguistically differentiated groups by Marina Alonso

Bolaños captures merely the scope of the Indigenous presence in that country and was commissioned expressly to question whether the rather vast anthropological literature on these groups has been matched by research on their musical practices. These surveys are complemented by case studies of rituals, performance traditions, and shamanic practices of specific groups (the Wakuénai in Venezuela; the Kamayurá in Brazil; the Aymara and Kechua in Bolivia and Peru; the Mapuche in Argentina; the Mískito in Nicaragua and Honduras; the Kuna in Panama; and the P'urhépecha in Mexico). Balancing this rich and still largely unexplored universe of meanings embodied in musical practices, Dale A. Olsen's substantive chapter on aerophones of traditional use probes the instruments that carry maximum cultural density among Native Americans. Two CDs with 44 examples illustrate the contributions to this volume, most of which were recorded in the field by the authors themselves.

In all cases, we sought the most widely recognized authorities to address these topics. The work of Irma Ruiz on Argentina, María Ester Grebe on Chile, Elizabeth Travassos on Brazil, Jonathan Hill on the Wakuénai, Ronny Velásquez on the Mískito and Kuna, Rafael José de Menezes Bastos on the Kamayurá, Max Peter Baumann on Bolivia, Thomas Turino on Peru, E. Fernando Nava López on the P'urhépecha, Carol E. Robertson on the Mapuche, and Dale A. Olsen on aerophones, represents a cross-section of classic research conducted between the 1970s and 1990s by two generations of scholars whose contributions to their respective areas of specialization remain largely unsurpassed. Within our “web of temporally and spatially changing and changeable set of relationships, or relationships among sets of relationships,” each of these authors captured a specific intersection of time, place, and peoples susceptible to flux and interpretive challenge.

The index provides both concordances and definitions of the fluid local terminology we retained in order to fulfill one of the overriding principles that animates this project, which is to draw the Anglophone reader into culture-specific terms of explanation, instead of “translating culture” by representing it through the conceptual framework of the receiver. This is an important editorial issue because it redresses the general tendency, at least in the United States, to homogenize terminology in order to render it more accessible to cultural outsiders. Such simplification would have obliterated the linguistic creativity that peoples across the continent display to assert their local identities. This principle applies to instruments, genres, and “ways of naming” in general that often do not meet the Anglophone reader's expectations of concision.

VOLUME 2 addresses the reconfiguration of the Caribbean's complex sonic map after the Conquest and the strategies through which diverse groups assigned new meanings to their partially reconstructed traditions. The Caribbean was the stage on which the initial drama of Conquest was played out. As Sidney W. Mintz and Sally Price state in their introduction to *Caribbean Contours* (1985: 10), “to characterize Caribbean peoples as sharing some kind of special personality or philosophy would be to vulgarize the complexity of their pasts and the much differentiated societies in which they live today.” Within different colonial histories, however, peoples in the Caribbean islands and in culturally related

mainland areas (such as Guyana) shared the experience of slavery and the presence of Africans of varied origins whose musical legacy left an indelible mark on their creative strategies. Few authors can tell the compelling story of these strategies as did Olive Lewin (1927–2013), who, as the Great Lady of Jamaica and a scholar/participant in the musical life of her country, carried within herself the heart of the nation. If the creolization process spawned a broad range of new musical forms catalyzed by the European and African legacies, the fluid process of self-representation has privileged an identification with a resignified African heritage. As Martha Ellen Davis states in her superb survey of oral traditions in the Dominican Republic, “each nation has its own discourse regarding its identity, based on a collective concept of its sociocultural composition and mythologized interpretation of historical events” (2007: 191).

Prefaced by Argeliers León’s masterful essay on the contribution of Africans and their descendants to concepts of timbric and rhythmic organization in traditional music, this volume includes studies of a representative cross-section of oral traditions in the Spanish-, French-, English-, and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. Among the latter is the moving “life story” of an 85 year-old man of African descent from Curaçao who, interviewed by Rose Mary Allen in 1984, recalls the traditional songs taught to him by his father and the struggle to subsist under the “pay for land” system that required those continuing to live on a plantation after Emancipation in 1863 to work for the owner a few days per week without pay. To underscore the significance of membranophones and idiophones in traditions of African provenance, the volume includes an organological study of *batá* drums and *güiros* in the context of Cuban Santería by Victoria Eli Rodríguez, and an essay on African-Venezuelan percussion ensembles that drum for San Juan in Barlovento by Max Brandt.

Surveys of music archives offer basic information and summary descriptions of holdings that can facilitate access and kindle the interest of researchers. The country profiles of islands and circum-Caribbean nations and territories aligned primarily with Caribbean “culture” provide a context for the reader to situate topical essays within historical overviews of each geopolitical entity. Each country profile includes information on demographic composition, political status and history, religions, and languages spoken; the national anthem (with musical example); an overview of oral and written musical traditions; organization of musical life; a chronology of the nation’s history; a brief section on communication media; a list of archives; and a selected bibliography.

VOLUME 3, which we would like to call “Latin America: Islands of History” *d’après* Marshall Sahlins, traces intersections ranging from pre-Columbian civilizations to late 20th-century composition, within which we chart the continuities and discontinuities that surface in this mosaic of expressions. In “Latin American fiction and the poetics of history,” the opening essay, Roberto González Echevarría captures the fundamental characteristics of the “marvelous real” quality of a history that began as fiction (the historical being of America conjured up by the European imagination), feeding a capacity to mythologize reality and invert the terms of the foundational *imaginaire* in modern archival fictions.

This special brand of creativity surfaces in the infinite ways in which the popular imagination reinvented received instruments, dances, traditions of performance, and concepts of music from its cultural tributaries, and this process continues.

The interplay of cultural identities that has characterized the New World experience for the past 500 years precludes any rigid separation between the domains of “folk,” “urban popular,” and “art” musical traditions. These reified categories curiously seem to have taken hold in Latin America only after the emergence of ethnomusicology in the United States, especially if we consider that distinguished music historiographers, such as the Uruguayan Lauro Ayestarán (1953), covered popular expressions as integral to the musical fabric of their respective nations (Kuss 1987a). Even the language discourages such segregation, since *música popular* denotes both “folk” and “urban popular” music. Argeliers León (1918–1991), the towering figure of an early generation of Cuban musicologists, addressed this issue, proposing a continuum of ancestry levels and degrees of elaboration within three sociogeographic contexts as the basis for inductive categories that also bridge the gap between oral and written *música popular*: (1) primordial elements (factores antecedentes o primigenios), those closest to their sources, which are found mostly in rural oral traditions and rituals; (2) infra-urban musics (factor urbano primario), which, although already disengaged from rural and ritual contexts, rely on any object capable of producing sonority, and within which León situates the semantic field of traditional *rumba* (*yambú*, *columbia*, and *guaguancó*); and (3) the “elaborated” urban expressions (factor urbano elaborado), comprising the well-known genres associated with both old and new Cuban popular music (such as the *contradanza*, *habanera*, bolero, *guaracha*, *danzón*, mambo, cha-cha-chá, and others of more recent vintage) (León 1982). His disciple Olavo Alén Rodríguez proposed another definition of *música popular* based on information theory that differentiates this domain by the proportion and balance between familiar and unfamiliar quantity of aesthetic information (Alén Rodríguez 1984: 393–94; Kuss 1994: 935–36). Whether León’s model is too evolutionary or even transferable to other cultural situations, and Alén Rodríguez’s model is too exclusionary of contextual variables, remains arguable. The merit of these alternatives, however, rests on rejecting artificial separations between fluid domains. The same permeability applies to “art” music, whose also artificially constructed domain so often interacts with popular expression.

The disposition of contributions in this volume often subverts chronology to suggest precisely the seamless transitions between oral and written traditions and the complex mixes at these boundaries. For instance, Luis Millones’ “Popular Dramas and Commemorations: The Incas of Carhuamayo,” in which he recovers constructions of an “idealized oral history” in 20th-century representations of the death of Atahualpa, is followed by my essay on the same theme in its version for the lyric stage by the Lima resident Carlo Enrico Pasta (1817–1898) on an original Italian libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni (1824–1893), which stands as the first opera on an Inca subject premiered in the Peruvian capital (Lima, 1877). Likewise, Beatriz Seibel’s “The *Payadores* of the Río de la Plata,” which traces the history of the old and idiosyncratic oral tradition of folk bards singing improvised verses to the accompaniment of guitar, is followed by an essay on *El matrero* (1929) by Argentinian composer Felipe Boero (1884–

1958), an iconic work in the construction of the national masterstory whose protagonist is an emblematic *payador*. Essays on 20th-century composition in volume 3 also establish links with oral traditions covered in previous tomes. For instance, the Andean panpipe called *siku* in Aymara, *antara* in Kechua, and *zampoña* in Spanish, which carries maximum cultural density in the organology of the region and plays an emblematic role in traditional music, is the icon deconstructed by two of Peru's most distinguished composers, Celso Garrido-Lecca (1926–2025) and Edgar Valcárcel (1932–2010). Entitled *Antaras* and *Zampoña sónica* respectively, both works were composed in 1968.

For Latin Americanists who favor holistic approaches to traditional, urban popular, and art musics, the artificial separation between ethnomusicology and historical musicology, as institutionalized in the United States, was only a necessary strategy of the former initially conceived to confront the institutionalized supremacy of the latter. Charles Seeger (1886–1979), who catalyzed the institutionalization of both disciplines in the United States, regretted the rift and often said that the study of all musics perhaps should take place under the umbrella of ethnomusicology “because we are all ethnic,” or, alternatively, under “musicology.” We adopt this broadly defined concept of musicology throughout this work. Although we cannot claim interdisciplinarity as defined by James Clifford *d’après* Barthes in *Writing Culture* (1986: 1), namely “the creation of a new object that belongs to no one,” this volume is enriched by the multi-disciplinarity converging in the sum total of individual perspectives from the fields of anthropology, ethnohistory, cultural theory, ethnomusicology, historical musicology, sociology, theater history, and literary criticism.

Organological studies published within the Anglophone sphere of influence often disregard the wealth of information that the vast instrumentarium indigenous to the Americas and adapted from its African and European tributaries can contribute to new approaches to taxonomy on a global scale, and to what Margaret Kartomi has called “an increased focus ... on orally transmitted, culture-emerging concepts and classifications of instruments and ensembles” (2001: 305). The literature on instruments is vast. A chapter on string instruments of traditional use, placed in the context of colonial music in Volume 3 because chordophones—with the exception of the musical bow—were not known in the Americas before the arrival of Europeans, complements comparable studies of aerophones and membranophones/idiophones in the corresponding contexts of volumes 1 and 2. Only exceptionally are tunings of instruments represented in conventional music notation. For pitch notation we have adopted a slightly modified version of the system used in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Sadie 1980: 1, xii), whereby middle C is c', with octaves above as c'', c''', etc., and octaves below as c, C, C', C'', etc. Pitch-classes, defined as all possible octave transpositions of the same pitch (all Ds, regardless of octave register, constitute pitch-class D), are given in capital letters.

Alejo Carpentier, in his masterful essay on “América Latina en la confluencia de coordenadas históricas y su repercusión en la música” (in *América Latina en su música*, edited by Isabel Aretz [Paris: UNESCO—siglo xxi editores, 1977, 7–19]), exalts the inexhaustible creativity of popular expression soaring throughout the world, to the detriment of the overall *savant* production:

Habanera, Argentinian tango, rumba, *guaracha*, bolero, Brazilian samba, were invading the world with its rhythms, its typical instruments, its rich arsenals of percussion now incorporated in their own right into symphonic ensembles. And now the musics of Mexico, Venezuela, and the Andes (as well as a renewed tango in sonority and style) are heard everywhere, with its *bandoneones*, guitars, *kenas* of ancestral lineage, harps from the Venezuelan llanos Kindled by the creativity of semi-erudite, popular, or *populachero* musicians, as certain academics specialized in the arts of harmony, counterpoint, and fugue would call them. These musics, however, were more useful, to tell the truth, for the process of affirming national identities than certain “symphonies” on Indigenous themes, countless orchestral “rhapsodies” grounded on folk roots, “symphonic poems” of “vernacular inspiration” (tremendously Impressionist, most of the time ...) that remain in the archives of conservatories as documents, titles for reference, and landmarks of local histories (Carpentier 1977: 17).

Habanera, tango argentino, rumba, guaracha, bolero, samba brasileña, fueron invadiendo el mundo con sus ritmos, sus instrumentos típicos, sus ricos arsenales de percusión hoy incorporados por derecho propio a la batería de los conjuntos sinfónicos. Y ahora son músicas de México, Venezuela, de los Andes (y un tango renovado en sonoridad y estilo) las que se escuchan en todas partes, con sus bandoneones, guitarras, quenás de muy viejo abolengo, arpas llaneras Música toda, debida a la inventiva de músicos semicultos, populares, populacheros, o como quieran llamarlos ciertos mesteres de clerecía, doctos en artes de armonía, contrapunto y fuga. Pero músicas que fueron más útiles, para decir la verdad, a la afirmación de un acento nacional nuestro, que ciertas “sinfonías” sobre temas indígenas, incontables “rapsodias” orquestales de gran trasfondo folklórico, “poemas sinfónicos” de “inspiración vernácula” (tremendamente impresionistas, casi siempre ...) que sólo quedan como documentos, títulos de referencia, jalones de historia local, en los archivos de conservatorios (Carpentier 1977: 17)

The contributions on urban popular musics of the New World address some of the most dynamic and significant expressions configuring the sonic map worldwide. Brazilian scholar Elizabeth Travassos, for instance, reminds us that samba—like Cuban *rumba*—is neither a genre nor a style, but a semantic field whose meanings have accumulated over the course of centuries: the exported image of samba as the urban music of an exotic Rio feeding the political economy of culture is only a recent face of this polysemic expression. Following a whimsical reading of the vast literature on the history of tango by Marta Savigliano, Ramón Pelinski provides a masterful essay on deterritorialized tango and Omar Corrado places the idiosyncratic art of Astor Piazzolla in the context of signifying a city. A critical essay by Pablo Vila probing theory of interpellation and the construction of narrative identities balances, at the end of the volume, the theoretical and transnational perspectives in genre-specific essays. Especially because this repertoire has attracted the attention of cultural theorists worldwide, who often rely only on studies published in English, these invaluable insights by cultural insiders carry the potential of bridging a significant gap between traditions of scholarship.

When Garcilaso de la Vega named his influential memoir *Comentarios reales de los Incas* (1609)—a chronicle whose wide European reception eventually would contribute to the egalitarian ideals that inspired the French Revolution and played a central role in the history of utopism (Montiel 1992 and 2000)—by *reales* he meant he meant that he was writing “the *real* history” of his people, certainly not the “royal” commentaries that mistranslators have made it out to be (as in Alain Gheerbrant’s edition [Garcilaso de la Vega 1609 in 1961]). We would not claim any such “truth” for any history, and,

especially, not ours, because, as David Lodge (2004) states in his review of Terry Eagleton's *After Theory* (2003), "we cannot return to such an age of innocence." We do attempt, however, to displace the center of gravity of the reader and relativize his/her ways of knowing. Any work of a comprehensive nature only can capture fragments of history, partly because so much remains unrecovered, and mostly because it would take hundreds of volumes to cover the vast quantity of available research on all possible themes and historical intersections. In this respect, the 10-volume *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana* directed by Emilio Casares Rodicio, with Victoria Eli Rodríguez and Benjamín Yépez Chamorro (1999–2002), a reference work that gathers contributions by hundreds of scholars, signals a new era in a field of study that my dear Nicolas Slonimsky called *terra incognita* (only for him, of course) when he, like Copland, visited a few Latin American countries in 1941 (Slonimsky 1945 in 1972: 1).

Above all, this work celebrates the creativity of countless musicians and the research they have inspired. It also celebrates the tenacity of the human spirit, because obstacles did not derail an enterprise that Samuel Claro Valdés lovingly called "our cultural adventure." We did not know where it would take us when we started it, energized by a commitment to the idea of providing a venue for peoples of the world to tell the story of their musics in their own terms and within their own frames of reference, values, and experiences. Thus, the mosaic of cultural practices captured in these pages is as rich as the diversity of perspectives on ways of knowing and "interpreting cultures." In the age of an interdependence that has been called "globalization" and its concomitant reaffirmation of local identities, we need to seize the possibility of making that elusive Other a part of our own narrative plot, not because it is politically correct or trendy to do so, or only through the often distant academic discourse of difference, but because an emotional rather than intellectual point of entry into a plurality of belief systems, and the *imaginaires* they sustain in a multiplicity of expressive forms, makes it possible for us to view our own not as "the true and right one," but as one more *imaginaire* among many. The certainty that it is theoretically impossible to translate the "feeling" of identification that practitioners and cultural insiders summon when they perform or listen to their musics should not deter us from trying.

In 1925, the Kuna chief Nele Kantule (1868–1944) started a successful political movement that, by 1938, had established the Kuna (Guna) ethnic nation as one of the strongest on the American continent. The vigor of his commitment, which ensured the autonomy of his people and the preservation of his millenarian culture, continues to guide their destiny, so far against all odds. As an epigraph for the first volume that follows, I chose Nele Kantule's words, so wisely chosen by Ronny Velásquez (p. 212 in the printed edition), which transcend their context and can define the purpose of my own journey:

I would like the culture of my race to survive within the universal framework of world cultures because only through the cultural expression of a people can we define the lasting legacy of the essence of their liberty, dignity, and respect as a nation.

Denton, Texas, August 11, 2004; revised December 6, 2025, in Cold Spring, New York

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