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An analytical study of Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Op.13, by Costa Rican composer Carolos Enrique Vargas

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**AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND
ORCHESTRA, OP. 13, BY COSTA RICAN COMPOSER
CARLOS ENRIQUE VARGAS**

A Monograph

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts**

in

The School of Music

By

**Manuel Matarrita
B. M., Universidad de Costa Rica, 1992
M. M., University of New Orleans, 2001
August, 2004**

To my father, Trimurti,
and in memory of my mother, Virginia.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed to the completion of this monograph. My sincere thanks to the members of my committee, especially Dr. Jeffrey Perry and Barineau Professor Constance Knox Carroll, for their advice and professional orientation; Alejandro Argüello for his invaluable help with the edition of Carlos Enrique Vargas' Piano Concerto; Roberto Enrique Vargas, for the important information he provided for this research, and for authorizing the reproduction of his father's composition; and my wife Stacy Chamblin, for her patience and unconditional support.

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ABSTRACT

Carlos Enrique Vargas Méndez (1919-1998) was one of the most influential and versatile Costa Rican musicians of the last century. His work involved many areas since he was an accomplished pianist and organist, conductor, composer, arranger, editor, pedagogue and musicologist. However, Vargas' work as a composer is perhaps the least researched and most neglected of the music disciplines he embraced. This research will focus on one of Vargas' most important compositions, his Piano Concerto Op. 13, composed and premiered in 1944.

The monograph is divided into four chapters. The first chapter includes a synopsis of the history of composition in Costa Rica, in order to provide historical background and musical influences on the Concerto. Chapter Two offers biographical information about Vargas, drawn from the most authoritative sources on the subject. The third chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the formal and thematic structures of the Concerto, and Chapter Four deals with some pedagogical and performance considerations of the composition. Due to the lack of a published version of the piece, a performance edition of the Concerto is presented in Appendix A. This edition was made with permission of the composer's son, Roberto Enrique Vargas.

CHAPTER ONE

MUSICAL COMPOSITION IN COSTA RICA: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Introduction

Costa Rica, one of the smallest countries in Latin America, is situated between Nicaragua and Panama. Columbus first saw this portion of Central America in 1502, on his last trip to the New World. Spanish settlement, however, did not begin until the mid 1500s. In 1562, Juan Vásquez de Coronado — the true *conquistador* of Costa Rica — arrived as governor. Nevertheless, of all the Spanish colonies, Costa Rica, and Central America in general, enjoyed the least influence as a colony. All these countries were, in the beginning, unpopular places to settle, mainly due to their few valuable or easily exploited resources. The Spanish were much more interested in developing their wealth in Mexico and Peru. Costa Rica's isolation from the Spanish colonial centers in Mexico and the Andes greatly contributed to the development of an autonomous and individualistic agrarian society that lasted for more than two centuries.¹ During this extended period of colonization, music had a modest role in the culture of the country, serving mostly as reinforcement in Catholic ceremonies. However, the composition of art music by native Costa Rican musicians did not begin until the nineteenth-century.²

When Mexico rebelled against Spain in 1821, Costa Rica joined the other Central American provinces in a mutual declaration of independence. Although the newly independent

¹ Carlos Monge Alfaro. *Historia de Costa Rica* (San José: Imprenta Trejos Hnos., 1966), 82.

² Bernal Flores. *La Música en Costa Rica*. (San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1978), 30-34.

provinces formed a Federation, this alliance ceased to function in 1838 and Costa Rica formally proclaimed itself a sovereign nation.³

The First Half of the Nineteenth-Century

Similar to most of the Latin America countries, the development of music in Costa Rica during the first years of its independent life was determined by the two main social institutions: government and church. Naturally, the professional level of the first national musicians was not proficient, but it fulfilled the needs of the religious and military rituals.⁴

In 1845, the Costa Rican government, in an effort to improve the musical level of the incipient military bands, hired musician José Martínez to organize the first national ensembles.⁵ Martínez founded the first national bands in at least three of the Central American countries: Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica.⁶ The emergence of new bands in the other provinces of the Costa Rica generated a national organization of bands called the *Dirección General de Bandas*. This organization is still in existence.

Bernal Flores summarizes the musical situation of this period:

During the first part of the 19th century, Costa Rica was organized politically and its geographical and cultural isolation made it difficult to manifest itself to a high degree; a few foreign musicians began to teach music in the territory, two modest

³ Monge, 160.

⁴ María Clara Vargas. "Práctica Musical en Costa Rica, 1845-1942." (M. A. thesis, Universidad de Costa Rica, 1999), 49.

⁵ Ibid., 38-9

⁶ There are some discrepancies concerning the biographical data of José Martínez. Vargas affirms that he was of Spanish origin (M. C. Vargas, 38), while Bernal Flores maintains that he was from Guatemala and died in 1852 (Stanley Stanley, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. 2001. S. v. "Costa Rica. Art Music" by Bernal Flores, v. 6, 528). On the other hand, Daniel Mendoza (*Music in Ibero-America to 1850: A Historical Survey*. Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2001, 388) affirms that Martínez's dates were ca. 1790-1846.

theaters were built, a system of bands (*Dirección General de Bandas*) was organized, and European instruments were joined with some instruments like the marimba. By 1830 the first pianos arrived in Costa Rica.⁷

These emergent military bands fulfilled several social functions. They not only served military duties, but also participated in religious ceremonies (such as solemn masses) and in public performances. The bands played concerts called *recreos* and *retretas*, open to the public and usually held in the city parks:

Gradually, these ensembles ceased to be merely reinforcement for the military activities, and assumed a fundamental role in the social entertainment of the civilians. The musical commands, ‘*de retraite*’ in French, that were used to alert the army to cease activities and, during the evenings, to summon the troops back to the headquarters, became true concerts outdoors. They were called *retretas*, if they took place during the evening, and *recreos* if they were held at some point in the afternoon.⁸

Particularly popular were the bands’ performances on Sundays. The *misa de tropa* (a Catholic mass in which the bands also played during the ceremony) was immediately followed by a *recreo* in the park. The repertoire performed in these concerts usually included adaptations of arias from operettas, *zarzuelas* (Spanish operettas), Viennese waltzes and marches.⁹ Evidently, music of light character for purposes of entertainment was the preference. The first national composers appeared during the second half of the nineteenth-century, and began to write music intended for this type of ensemble and audience. This first group is described by Flores as “the

⁷ Bernal Flores. “La Vida Musical de Costa Rica en el Siglo XIX.” In *Die Musikkulturen Lateinamerikas im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Robert Günther, 261-275 (Munich: Gustav Bosse Verlag Regensburg, 1982), 275.

⁸ M. C. Vargas, 104. Translated by author.

⁹ Flores (1982), 265.

first crop of composers, performers and musicians that may be considered talented but not ingenious.”¹⁰ From this first generation of composers, Manuel María Gutiérrez and Rafael Chávez Torres deserve special attention.

Manuel María Gutiérrez (1829-1887), was the director of the band of Heredia, his native city, and assumed the administration of the *Dirección General de Bandas* in 1852.¹¹ A composer of band music and some salon pieces, his most important achievement was undoubtedly the composition of the Costa Rican National Anthem in 1852.¹² Forced by the circumstances of the incipient musical environment and the lack of professional musicians, composers such as Gutiérrez had to be very versatile, as can be inferred from this remark by the composer in 1861:

Now that I am able to have some free time during the day, I have decided to use those hours to teach guitar, piano, harmonica, flute, violin and voice... I do not promise to achieve great results, because my limitations are known; but I do offer my best services, trying to please all those who want to be taught by me... [I also offer] music pieces, easily arranged for the piano, guitar, etc... Among them, polkas, mazurkas, dances, contra-dances, marches, extracts from the best operas for voice and piano; music arranged for a single instrument, for two or more, as well as for small ensembles or military bands.¹³

Rafael Chávez Torres (1839-1907) succeeded Gutiérrez in the *Dirección General de Bandas*. Also a composer of mazurkas, waltzes and salon music, Chávez is best known for his funeral march *El Duelo de La Patria* (“The Sorrow of the Fatherland”) which became quite popular and was played in many types of ceremonies, particularly at the processions during Holy

¹⁰ Ibid., 275.

¹¹ Flores (1978), 40. According to the source, Gutiérrez assumed the administration of the *Dirección General de Bandas* upon the death of José Martínez in 1852.

¹² Ibid., 62.

¹³ Quoted in M. C. Vargas, 58. Translated by author.

Week.¹⁴ Other Costa Rican composers of this time were Pilar Jiménez (1835-1922), Gordiano Morales (1839-1917), Carlos Gutiérrez Rodríguez (1865-1934) and Roberto Campabadal (1881-1931).

The Second Generation of Composers

During the second half of the nineteenth-century, the situation of the Costa Rica improved greatly due to the fast developing economy based on the production of coffee. The musical environment was influenced by this economic prosperity. Several events that occurred during this period denoted a change in the cultural mentality of the country. Foreign opera companies, mostly European, started performing frequently in San José. Musicians from abroad were brought to the country to teach. A number of philharmonic societies were established, comprised of both experienced and amateur musicians. By the end of the century, two important music schools opened: the *Escuela Nacional de Música* in 1890 and the *Escuela de Música Santa Cecilia* in 1894.¹⁵ Finally, in October 1897 San José witnessed the inauguration of the Costa Rican National Theater, the most important cultural venue in the country, built with the patronage and sponsorship of the *cafetaleros*, the growing coffee-elite.

A new generation of local composers emerged during this period. They already showed a steadfast interest in European music, evidently influenced by the flow of international guest musicians. Some of these composers, such as Alejandro Monestel, Ismael Cardona and Julio Fonseca, also had the opportunity to study abroad and perfect their compositional techniques.¹⁶

¹⁴ Flores (1982), 266.

¹⁵ Ibid., 275.

¹⁶ Flores (1978), 62.

Alejandro Monestel (1865-1950) studied in the Conservatory of Brussels from 1880 to 1884; he was mainly devoted to the composition of religious music. From 1884 to 1902 he served as *maestro de capilla* and organist at San José Cathedral, and in 1894 he founded the *Escuela de Música Santa Cecilia*.¹⁷ In 1902 he moved to New York and worked as an organist in several important churches. Many of his religious compositions, including the cantatas “The Seven Last Words of Jesus”, “The Passion of the Christ” and “The Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord” were published in the United States.¹⁸

Like Monestel, Julio Fonseca (1885-1950) also studied in Brussels. From the musicians of his generation, Fonseca “represents the most important ‘late Romantic’ composer in Costa Rica.”¹⁹ His style was also influenced by Impressionism, and his compositional output included religious pieces, chamber music, piano and orchestral compositions, salon pieces and educational songs.²⁰ He was also the first composer who revealed a conscious nationalistic inclination:

I am a believer in nationalism, in order for each country to have a personal mark in its compositional school. That is why, here in my homeland, I have put all my effort into collecting and disseminating our popular and folk music, to facilitate the composers with a source of inspiration and grant to their works an original national flavor. Unfortunately, we stumble with the weakness of our indigenous folklore, and regarding the popular music of the country, the material is not completely original. Three composers, including myself, have undertaken the mission of working on this music: Alejandro Monestel with his *Rapsodias Guanacastecas*, Julio Mata with his operetta *Toyupán*, and myself in the *Fantasia*

¹⁷ Otto Mayer-Serra. *Música y Músicos de Latinoamérica* (Mexico D.F.: Editorial Atlante, 1947), 657.

¹⁸ Flores (1978), 127.

¹⁹ Ibid., 129.

²⁰ Ibid.

Sinfónica, in which I adopted the *Punto Guanacasteco*, the most popular motive of our music, as the principal theme and developed it in the form of a fugue at the end.²¹

Among Fonseca's complete works — more than 200 compositions — the following are his most important compositions: Sonata for Violin and Piano; Trio No. 1 for Piano, Violin and Cello; *Gran Fantasía Sinfónica* and *Suite Tropical*, both for orchestra; several piano pieces (waltzes, mazurkas, nocturnes, etudes) and a children's opera named *Caperucita Encarnada*.

Julio Mata (1899-1969) was another important composer of this generation. After studying in the United States from 1921 to 1926, he returned to his native country, and by 1940 was appointed conductor of the military band of San José. His most important compositions were the operettas *Toyupán* and *Rosas de Norgaria*, both based on national subjects, and some orchestral works such as *Suite Piedras Preciosas* and *Suite Abstracta*.²² Conversely, Costa Rican composer José Castro Carazo (1895-1982) made his career in the United States. A well-known violinist and conductor of bands for several years in San José, he later moved to Louisiana. His close friendship with governor Huey P. Long granted him a position with the band of Louisiana State University. There, he was famous for compositions he wrote for that ensemble such as *Touchdown for LSU* and *Darling of LSU*.²³ He never returned to his homeland.

Military bands were still in vogue in Costa Rica; however, the leading composers of this generation also started writing works for symphonic ensembles. Although these were usually

²¹ Quoted in Mayer-Serra, 248. Translated by author.

²² Miguel Ficher, Martha Furman Schleifer and John M. Furman, ed. *Latin American Classical Composers: A Biographical Dictionary*, 2d ed. (Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2002), 354-5.

²³ Flores (1978), 134.

rather unpretentious compositions, they nonetheless led to the establishment of the first professional symphony, the *Orquesta Sinfónica de Costa Rica*, founded in 1927 under the direction of Belgian conductor Juan Loots.²⁴ Unfortunately, this ensemble did not last long. Meanwhile, other composers were devoted to writing popular songs, mostly for educational purposes. Among those deserving mention are José Joaquín Vargas Calvo (1879-1956), José Daniel Zúñiga (1899-1981) and Alcides Prado (1900-1984). Vargas Calvo was also Monestel's successor as the director of the *Escuela de Música Santa Cecilia*.

The New Generations

The 1940s were definitive in the musical development of the Costa Rica. In 1940 a new orchestra, still in existence, was founded: the *Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Costa Rica*. In 1942, the Costa Rican government founded the *Conservatorio Nacional de Música* (now called the *Escuela de Artes Musicales de la Universidad de Costa Rica*) and provided financial support for the emergent orchestra.²⁵ A new generation of composers flourished during this period; the first important figure of this new group was Carlos Enrique Vargas (1919-1998), mostly recognized during his lifetime as an outstanding performer and pedagogue. Vargas composed the first concerto and the first symphony ever composed in Costa Rica. His biographical profile will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Benjamín Gutiérrez (b. 1937), pianist and composer, studied in Guatemala, the United States and Argentina. Among his teachers were Darius Milhaud and Alberto Ginastera.²⁶ His

²⁴ Ibid., 80.

²⁵ M. C. Vargas, 5.

²⁶ Ficher, 258.

most important works include his *Variaciones Concertantes* for Piano and Orchestra; Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra; the operas *Marianela*, *Las Dos Evas* and *El Pájaro del Crepúsculo*, and the scenic cantata *Fuego y Sombra* based on the life of the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca. In 2002, Gutiérrez was awarded the *Premio Magón*, the most important honor in Costa Rican culture.

Bernal Flores (b. 1937) was not only the most avant-garde composer of his time in Costa Rica, but is also an avid music historian and ethnomusicologist. He earned his doctoral degree in composition from the Eastman School of Music in 1964, having studied with Bernard Rogers, Wayne Barlow and Howard Hanson. His works include *The Land of Heart's Desire* (opera); two symphonies; Concerto for Piano, Percussion and Orchestra; a Clarinet Concerto; several chamber pieces and *Seven Dodecaphonic Toccatas* for piano.²⁷

Rocío Sanz (1934-1993) studied in California, and settled in Mexico in 1954, where she was a student of Carlos Jiménez Mabarak, Blas Galindo and Rodolfo Halfter. She was also awarded a scholarship to study at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow from 1965 to 1966. Her works include the ballets *El Forastero* and *Letanía Erótica para la Paz*, the suite *Hilos* for orchestra, and the renowned *Cantata de la Independencia* for baritone, chorus and symphonic band.²⁸ Her compositions have been recently rescued and catalogued by the University of Costa Rica. Similar to Sanz, Dolores Castegnaro (1900-1971) settled in Mexico where she developed a successful career as a songwriter and conductor. In the 1930s, she studied in Italy at the *Conservatorio di Musica Giuseppe Verdi* in Milan, and later at the *Academia Filarmonica di*

²⁷ Ibid., 200.

²⁸ Ibid., 507.

Bologna. Other composers of this generation were Mariano Herera (1902-1969), Ricardo Ulloa Barrenechea (b. 1928), who studied in Spain, and Jorge Luis Acevedo (b. 1943), who has written several cantatas inspired by the indigenous cultures of Costa Rica.

The latest generation of Costa Rican composers has been led by Luis Diego Herra (b. 1952), a disciple of Benjamín Gutiérrez. Also a conductor, Herra studied with Leo Barzin and Pierre Deveraux at the *Conservatoire de Strasbourg*, in France.²⁹ His most remarkable compositions are *K509* for solo piano; Symphony No.1; Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra, and his recent Piano Concerto (2001). Other Costa Rican composers, currently active in the cultural life of the country, are Mario Alfaro-Güell, Allen Torres, Carlos Castro, Alejandro Cardona, Eddie Mora, Carlos Escalante, Otto Castro, Alejandro Argüello and Vinicio Meza.

²⁹ Ibid., 271.

CHAPTER TWO

CARLOS ENRIQUE VARGAS

Biographical Sketch

Carlos Enrique Vargas Méndez is regarded as one of the most influential and versatile Costa Rican musicians of the last century. His work involved many disciplines since he was an accomplished pianist and organist, conductor, composer, arranger, editor, pedagogue and musicologist. During his lifetime, he was indeed a pioneer in a country whose musical culture was not highly developed.

Born on 25 July 1919, Carlos Enrique Vargas was the youngest of eight children. Raised in a family of musicians that included both parents and several of his brothers and sisters, he was the only child who showed a truly serious interest in pursuing a musical career.¹ Beginning in his early childhood, he took piano and organ lessons from his father, José Joaquín Vargas Calvo, who was not only a renowned music pedagogue and composer but also a government diplomat. The latter circumstance required the family to live for several years in Detroit, Michigan, during the late 1920's. They returned to Costa Rica in 1933. At age 15, Carlos Enrique had already become his father's assistant at the *Escuela de Música Santa Cecilia* in San José.²

In 1938, upon Vargas Calvo's designation as the Costa Rican General Consul to Rome, the Vargas family moved to Italy. There, Carlos Enrique had the privilege of entering the *Conservatorio Santa Cecilia*, graduating in 1939.³ Among his teachers in Italy were Carlo Zecchi (piano), Cesare Dobici (harmony and composition) and Rev. A. Santini (organ and gregorian

¹ Anabel Campos Cantero. *Carlos Enrique Vargas: Vida y Música* (San José: Editorial UNED, 2003), 33.

² Ibid., 36.

³ Ibid., 40.

chant).⁴ Upon his return to Costa Rica in 1940, Carlos Enrique Vargas was the most qualified and well-trained pianist, composer, conductor and music theorist in the country. Some of the most significant activities of his career included being Professor of Music at the *Colegio Superior de Señoritas* (1940-1958), official organist of San José Cathedral (1950-1972), founder and director of the University of Costa Rica Chorus (1955), and official conductor of the Costa Rican National Symphony (1968-70). In addition, he traveled to Germany in 1958 for two months to participate in a series of classes in order to perfect his knowledge in conducting.⁵

Vargas is considered one of this century's most outstanding music pedagogues in Costa Rica. He is recognized for emphasizing the importance of teaching “classical music” in the music education programs in secondary schools, especially at the *Colegio Superior de Señoritas*. He also intituted an important program of Music Appreciation classes at the University of Costa Rica. Most importantly, until his death in 1998, he was one of the most renowned private piano teachers in Costa Rica. His widow, María Eugenia Dengo de Vargas, comments regarding Vargas’ labor as a piano instructor:

His labor is worthy of praise, due to his contribution to the development of the careers of a substantial number of pianists that currently work successfully in the artistic and pedagogic environment of the country. Several generations of national musicians, of diverse fields of expertise, can be counted among his disciples, not only in piano, but also in harmony and musical analysis. He taught constantly until 1997, devoted to create a lot of pedagogical material especially prepared for his students. He was characterized for his willingness to give musical advice to anyone who required it, not only because of his pedagogical knowledge, but also because of the extraordinary organization of his archives of musicological information.⁶

⁴ Mayer-Serra, 1027.

⁵ Campos, 47.

⁶ Quoted in Campos, 118. Translated by author.

Some of Vargas' most important students still active in Costa Rica are: Pilar Aguilar, Flora Elizondo, Gertrudis Feterman, Patricia Valverde, Jorge Carmona and Federico Molina. In 1984, Valverde and Carmona established a duo piano that later was named *Dúo Vargas* in recognition of Carlos Enrique's exceptional artistry.

As a performer, Vargas gave an outstanding number of solo and chamber recitals, both as pianist and organist, as well as several appearances as soloist with the Costa Rican Symphony. These performances included the national premiere of several compositions. Among the most significant works he performed in Costa Rica were: Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* (1944), Bach's Concerto in F Minor (1945, 1950), Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5 (1947) and the piano version of Beethoven's Violin Concerto in D, Op. 61 (1985), several of Bach's concerti for more than one piano, Bartok's Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion, and Shostakovich's Concerto No. 1.⁷ Vargas was also in demand as an accompanist in Central America. He had the privilege of accompanying important artists such as Henryk Szering, Ricardo Odnoposoff, Ivan Toth, Rubén González and Daniel Heifetz, among others.⁸

Vargas as a Composer

Vargas' work as a composer is perhaps the least researched and most neglected of the musical disciplines he embraced. Although his compositions are few, they are ambitious and outstanding. In her recent book *Carlos Enrique Vargas: Vida y Música*, Anabel Campos Cantero catalogues his entire compositional output. It includes about thirty minor piano works, four orchestral compositions, five choral works, and a handful of arrangements and orchestrations of works by other composers.⁹ It is interesting to note that Vargas' most remarkable compositions

⁷ Ibid., 114.

⁸ Ibid., 117.

⁹ Ibid., 137-147. See Appendix B.

were written shortly after his return to Costa Rica in 1940. Up to this point, musical composition in the country had been mainly comprised of band music, salon pieces, religious works and some modest symphonic compositions; composers had not explored major genres such as the symphony or concerto. Vargas' most significant works are: Mass in D for Unison Choir and Organ (1940); Variations for piano Op. 9 (1941); Elegy to the Memory of Sergei Rachmaninoff (for orchestra, 1943); Concerto for Piano and Orchestra Op. 13 (1944); Symphony Op. 17 (1945) and the incidental music *Antígona* (1961).¹⁰ This last composition, based on Sophocles' tragedy, was originally scored for chorus and orchestra and it was regarded by the composer as his most important work.¹¹

Vargas' style of composition, as shown in the works of this period, reveals definite influences of Post-Romanticism; his language is undoubtedly based on European models. Luis Correa de Azevedo remarks that there are two clearly distinct tendencies in Latin American art music of the twentieth-century, defined mainly by the historical background of each particular country.¹² One of those trends is associated with the search for ethnic elements and their incorporation within a more stylized musical frame. The other tendency deals with the assimilation of European contemporary styles of musical composition in which no national elements are included. Vargas' style is clearly more identified with the latter. Although he arranged a significant amount of Costa Rican popular and folk music for diverse ensembles, his own compositions do not incorporate national elements. For instance, with regard to the style of his Symphony, the composer himself remarked in 1950:

¹⁰ Ibid., 74-82.

¹¹ Ibid., 47.

¹² Luis Correa de Azevedo, "La Música de América Latina." In *América Latina en su Música*, ed. Isabel Aretz (Mexico D.F.: Siglo Vientiuno Editores, 1977), 53-72.

It is not a descriptive work after traditional models, but a work in the modern style, with many modern rhythmic and harmonic elements, and it can be said that it responds to the contemporary current of musical composition. For this is the time we live in, and I believe we should go according to our times, making an effort to improve and create new forms. However, and I admit it openly, although today there are such great composers as Hindemith, Prokofiev, Milhaud, and many others, it is more difficult to equal or better such giants as Bach and Beethoven, eternally great composers. Only future generations will look at the musical panorama of our time with a more accurate vision.¹³

Although Vargas himself reveals his familiarity with contemporary composers as a result of his years of study in Europe, his works, nevertheless, can be considered somewhat conservative. The harmonic language of his works is basically tonal and the formal structure is fairly conventional. In addition, traditional compositional routines such as sonata-form, cyclic forms, motivic development and variation can be recognized in works such as the Piano Concerto. Nevertheless, considering the limited access to avant-garde music in Costa Rica in the 1940s and 50s, Vargas was indeed an original composer.

The compositions of Carlos Enrique Vargas have long been neglected, even though, in 1994, he was awarded the *Premio Magón*.¹⁴ Almost none of the sources of information about Costa Rican art music and composers have included a mention of Vargas' contribution. The most respected study on the subject up to this date, *La Música en Costa Rica*, was published by Bernal Flores in 1978. The author does mention Vargas' compositions, but he does not examine in depth the relevance of the works to their historical context.

In the section about Costa Rican art music in the encyclopedia *Música y Músicos de Latinoamérica* by Otto Mayer-Serra (1947), the author recognizes Vargas as one of the

¹³ Quoted in Roberto Vargas, *Carlos Enrique Vargas: Sinfonía* (Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Costa Rica, Concert of Costa Rican Symphonic Music, 14 November 1999. Auditorio Nacional, San José), Program Notes, 16. Translated by author.

¹⁴ Interestingly, that occasion was the first time that this award was given to a musician.

outstanding composers of the “new generation”.¹⁵ But on the other hand, fifty years after that publication, there is still no entry in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* for Vargas as a composer, and indeed, his name is not even mentioned in the article, also written by Flores, about Costa Rican art music in that encyclopedia.¹⁶ There is no record about him in the database of the Center for Latin American Music Studies, sponsored by Indiana University. None of his compositions have been catalogued or acquired by the National Archives of Costa Rican Music, sponsored by the University of Costa Rica. The original manuscripts of his complete works remain in the custody of the composer’s family.

Fortunately, Vargas has been recently added to the 2002 edition of *Latin American Classical Composers Biographical Dictionary*.¹⁷ Also, and most importantly, Anabel Campos’ research on the life and works of Carlos E. Vargas was published in 2003; it is by far the most authoritative study on the composer. Campos focuses on the biographical facts, and it is a reliable document since the information was acquired from primary sources.

There are several reasons why Vargas has not been recognized as a composer. First, although his compositions are significant, they are not numerous. According to Roberto E. Vargas, his father gave up writing music because he felt that it was not financially worthwhile to embark upon a composing career in a small country such as Costa Rica, during the mid-century cultural situation.¹⁸ It was then more lucrative, and still remains so, to build a career as a performer or conductor. On the other hand, works such as the Piano Concerto and the Symphony

¹⁵ Mayer-Serra, 249.

¹⁶ Stanley Sadie, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. 2001. S. v. “Costa Rica. Art Music” by Bernal Flores, v. 6, 528-29.

¹⁷ Ficher, 580.

¹⁸ Roberto Enrique Vargas. Son of composer Carlos E. Vargas. Interviewed by author, 28 July 2003. Tape recording.

were written when Vargas was in his middle twenties. Later in life, he regarded these pieces as young and not fully formed compositions, and affirmed that he would not let musicians have access to them until after his death. However, during his late years, the composer revised the music and made new copies, including a new manuscript of the Piano Concerto.

The composer was interested in the rediscovery of his works by new generations. Following his death in 1998, there has been a resurgence of interest in his compositions. The Costa Rican National Symphony performed both the Symphony and the Piano Concerto during the 1999 season, with a favorable reception. Recently, other works by Vargas have been performed and recorded. His *Dos Piezas* for piano duet was published by the University of Costa Rica Press.¹⁹ These compositions were also recorded by the Feterman Piano Duo, along with his arrangement for two pianos of Ernesto Lecuona's *Afro-Cuban Dances*.²⁰ However, a publication and a commercial recording of the Symphony and the Piano Concerto are still needed. This monograph aims to stimulate interest in such a project, and with that purpose in mind, a performance edition of the Piano Concerto is attached to this research as an appendix.

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 13

Carlos Enrique Vargas' Concerto for Piano and Orchestra (*Concierto para Piano y Orquesta* in its original title), represents a landmark in the history of Costa Rican art music since it is the first work of its kind written by a Costa Rican composer.²¹ It is also one of the first compositions of this genre composed in Central America.²² The work was written between

¹⁹ Carlos Enrique Vargas. "Dos piezas para piano a cuatro manos." In *Música Costarricense para Cuatro Manos*, ed. Jorge Carmona and Patricia Valverde. (San José: Editorial Universidad de Costa Rica, 2001), 23-21.

²⁰ Carlos Enrique Vargas. "Dos piezas para piano a cuatro manos." In *Dúo Feterman: Juegos Musicales para Cuatro Manos*, performed by Gertrudis and Sara Feterman (San José: by the performers, 2002). Compact Disc.

²¹ Mayer Serra, 249.

²² Vargas' composition was probably preceded by the *Concertino for Piano and Chamber Orchestra* by Guatemalan composer Salvador Ley. This work was apparently written in 1942, according to Nicolas Slominsky in *Music of Latin America* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1945), 206. However, no other source (Sadie, Mayer-Serra, and Fischer, included) provide information regarding this work and/or its year of composition.

25 February and 18 April 1944.²³ Vargas' Concerto was premiered on 25 July of the same year at the Costa Rican National Theater with the 25-year-old composer at the piano. He was accompanied by the Costa Rican Symphony under conductor Hugo Mariani.²⁴ Although it can be considered a youthful work, Vargas's Piano Concerto certainly pioneered a new school of composition in Costa Rica.²⁵ Costa Rican composer Mario Alfaro-Güell remarks on the importance of Vargas' Concerto in the development of Costa Rican art music:

To embark upon the composition of genres such as the symphony or the piano concerto indicates the level of development of the musical environment, as well as the professional level of the composer. When the composer himself performs as the soloist in his work, without obstacles, we conclude that he is an artist of true versatility and proficiency. By evaluating the work and situating it in the context of his other works, we find an artist of outstanding maturity, profundity and seriousness.²⁶

There are three different manuscripts of the work, all of them in the custody of the composer's family. Two of the manuscripts consists of the adaptation for two pianos; one is the original version and the other the corrected form. However, very few changes were made in the second version. The third manuscript is the full score, based on the corrected version. An opus number is not provided in any of the cited documents. On the other hand, in her catalog of Vargas' compositions, Anabel Campos cites the Piano Concerto as Vargas' opus 13.²⁷

²³ Mayer Serra, 249.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Since the composition of his Piano Concerto in 1944, three similar works have been written by Costa Rican composers: Concerto for Piano, Percussion and Orchestra by Bernal Flores (1963), *Variaciones concertantes* for Piano and Orchestra by Benjamín Gutiérrez (1969) and Piano Concerto by Luis Diego Herra (2001).

²⁶ Mario Alfaro Güell, *Carlos Enrique Vargas: Concierto para Piano y Orquesta*, (Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Costa Rica, XI Concert, 22 and 24 October 1999), Program Notes, 13-15. Translated by author.

²⁷ Campos, 139. See Appendix B.

The work has been performed on six different occasions. After its premiere in 1944, new performances were given on 18 and 20 March 1950 (Costa Rican National Theater and University of Costa Rica, respectively), and on 22 November 1955 (Costa Rican National Theater). All of these performances featured the composer as the soloist.²⁸ The work was revived more than forty years later, on 22 and 24 October 1999 (Costa Rican National Theater and National Auditorium, respectively), with the author at the piano, accompanied by the Costa Rican National Symphony conducted by Irwing Hoffman. On the occasion of the 1999 performance of the Concerto, music critic Andrés Sáenz wrote:

The concert included the revival of the Piano Concerto, a work of youth by our compatriot Carlos Enrique Vargas (1919-1998), written in 1944, premiered by the composer the following year [*sic*], and not performed since [*sic*] ... Vargas' Concerto retains the traditional three-movement structure within a tonal harmonic texture, with graceful melodies in a Neo-Romantic style. The opposition between soloist and orchestra is clearly delineated and the orchestral treatment contrasts moments of a certain frugality with others of some opulence... Hopefully we will not have to wait fifty years more to hear another splendid performance of this piece.²⁹

After 1955, Vargas' Piano Concerto remained virtually unknown to Costa Rican musicians and audiences. The 1999 performance of the work was part of an effort by the Costa Rican National Symphony to revive not only Vargas' compositions, but also other works by Costa Rican composers. The Concerto was well received by the audience and the musicians. After hearing the performance in 1999, musicologist and pianist Enrique Cordero commented:

Although it is a work from his youth, [Vargas' Concerto] is one of the best pieces composed in the country regarding musical structure, and it is the creation of someone with great talent and solid background; he really knew what he was doing.

²⁸ Ibid., 78.

²⁹ Andres Sáenz, "Medio siglo de espera." *La Nación Online*, 26 October 1999 (<http://www.nacion.com/viva/1999/octubre/26/cul4.html>). Translated by author.

It should be a compulsory piece in the repertoire of the national pianists. The work can be placed within a Neo-Romantic current, in a traditional language with traces of Impressionism, such as parallel seventh chords with atypical resolutions... It is a highly pianistic composition.³⁰

The Concerto follows the standard concerto scheme in three movements: fast-slow-fast. The orchestration is fairly conventional, calling for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets in B^b, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings. The formal structure and harmonic language of the composition is also quite traditional. Nonetheless, although Vargas' integration of long-established musical styles would seem to be non avant-garde for a piece composed in 1944, if one places this particular work in the context of a country in which the composition of symphonic music had been almost absent, it remains remarkable.

In *Música y Músicos de Latinoamérica*, Mayer-Serra offers a formal sketch of the Concerto, probably provided by Vargas himself³¹:

It is cast in three movements; its initial theme (*Adagio*) reappears in the following two movements. The slow introduction is followed by an *Allegro*, and then the second theme (*Andante tranquillo*) emerges in the violoncellos. The cadenza leads to the recapitulation. In the *Coda*, the violins present a new version of the second theme, while the piano accompanies with arpeggiated figurations. After the second movement (*Andante*), follows a new movement (*Allegro molto*), conceived in the form of a passacaglia, composed of twenty-four variations developed after a theme of eight notes. After a short cadenza by the piano, melodic fragments of the two previous movements are presented combined with the passacaglia theme to close the composition.³²

³⁰ Quoted in Campos, 75. Translated by author.

³¹ Vargas' Concerto was composed and premiered only three years before Mayer-Serra's book was published. Most likely, the overall analysis would have been provided by the composer since at that time, the composition was (and still remains) unpublished.

³² Mayer-Serra, 249. Translated by author.

In conclusion, the following is an observation by Roberto E. Vargas, in regard to his father's Piano Concerto:

It is important to remark my father's compositional skills, since he wrote the Concerto when he was only 24. His acquaintance with the instruments was so refined that he knew perfectly how to write a piece that would be interesting both for the pianist and the audience, without being very difficult. To some extent, it is an innovative concerto, and it responds to the fashion of his day. Some sections resemble Gershwin's style (especially in the piano part and the main themes), with a lot of chromaticism. It is rather short and not tedious. The last movement is a passacaglia, a feature that cannot be found in any other piano concerto.³³

³³ Quoted in Campos, 75. Translated by author.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYTICAL ANNOTATIONS ON CARLOS ENRIQUE VARGAS' CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA

Formal Analysis

Movement I: Adagio-Allegro

The first movement of Vargas' Piano Concerto (*Adagio-Allegro*) contrasts two basic groups of themes, one chromatic and the other diatonic. Since the traditional sections (exposition, development and recapitulation) are clearly recognizable, the movement seems to follow the sonata-form principle, although with some modifications.¹ For instance, the second theme appears in the tonic key in both the exposition and the recapitulation, unusual in a standard sonata-form movement. That harmonic strategy, however, makes perfect sense if one considers that the first theme, because of its chromatic quality, does not delineate a specific key area. Therefore, Vargas bases the formal plan more by the use of thematic contrast than by the differentiation of key areas.

The piece begins with a short cadenza four measures long, for solo piano, marked *Adagio* ♩ = 84. This brief cadenza, which appears thereafter as a kind of a leitmotiv, is based on the repetition of four different harmonies in the low register of the instrument. The open voicing of these chords and the apparent ambiguity of their tonal function make it difficult to designate any specific key. In addition, the bass line moves in intervals of fourths (both perfect and

¹ For more information on the sonata-form principle, see: Edward T. Cone. *Music Form and Music Performance* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), 76-77.

augmented), avoiding any sense of functional tonality. However, E^b can be recognized as the pitch center, since it is the first and the last bass line pitch of this short progression, and ultimately, E^b Major will be the tonal goal of this movement and the entire piece. The descending chromatic motive outlined in the top voice of the chords will also be an important thematic element throughout the entire composition (Ex. 3.1).

The musical score for Ex. 3.1 is written for piano in 6/4 time, marked Adagio with a tempo of 84. It consists of four measures of chords, labeled as a 'LEITMOTIV'. The top voice of each chord features a descending chromatic line, while the bottom voice has a steady eighth-note pattern. The first two measures are marked with a forte (f) dynamic and a rallentando (rall.) instruction. The third measure is marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The fourth measure is marked with a molto ritardando (molto rit.) instruction. A tritone interval is indicated between the first and fourth measures.

Ex. 3.1 - Vargas, Concerto, I mvt., mm. 1-4

It is interesting to note that, initially, Vargas did not indicate barlines in this cadenza, to give the sense of a free improvisation. In the original manuscript he had written a quarter-note rest with a fermata in between each set of chords. However, in the corrected edition, he substituted barlines for the rests, and added the meters 6/4, 9/4 and 4/4. In addition, the first version has the indication *Cadenza breve* at the beginning of this section, but the composer removed it in the corrected manuscript. The chord progression featured in this introductory passage (or leitmotiv) will become extremely important throughout the composition since it recurs in all three movements.²

² For analytical purposes, this progression has been labeled as “leitmotiv”. However, such an indication does not appear in any of Vargas’ manuscripts.

The orchestra enters in m. 5, marked *Allegro* ♩ = 160, in 4/4 meter. The woodwinds present thematic material derived from the leitmotiv: a descending chromatic motive of three notes that resolve by a leap (Theme A¹). Also, the interval of a tritone (most of the time spelled as an augmented fourth) is an important harmonic and melodic characteristic of this first section. These intervals are also derived from the leitmotiv, since every chord of that introductory passage contains at least one tritone. Harmonically, the constant use of tritones denies any sense of tonality and reinforces the chromaticism of the main motive. For instance, at the entrance of the orchestra, the bassoons play a sequence of parallel tritones accompanying the main melodic motive in the oboes. Conversely, the melodic pattern is either contained within a range of a tritone or resolved by a leap of a tritone (Ex. 3.2).

Allegro ♩ = 160 THEME A1

Orch.

Bsn.

Ex. 3.2 - Vargas, Concerto, I mvt., mm. 5-8

This same progression in mm. 5-8 is presented once more by clarinets and woodwinds, transposed, not surprisingly, up an augmented fourth. Until this point, the absence of a pure major or minor harmony has reinforced the tonal ambiguity. It is not until m. 13, when the full orchestra enters, that a major chord, centered on D, is momentarily heard. However, this apparent

arrival point is almost immediately weakened by a new transposition of the material, once again by tritone, this time moving downward (centered on A^b), in m. 16.

In mm. 19-20 there is a short bridge based on the pitches E and F. However, E is actually the temporary tonal center and F functions as an upper neighbor. This bridge leads to an entrance of the piano, accompanied this time by the orchestra. The meter now alternates between 12/8 and 9/8. The material in this musical statement (Theme A²) is clearly based on the harmonic progression of the initial cadenza. Again, Vargas embellishes the progression by adding an upper neighbor harmony to the first chord of the harmonic outline (similar to mm. 19-20). Also, an important rhythmic characteristic in this section is the syncopation of the bass line in the piano part. Here, the left hand plays an eighth-note octave ahead of the right hand, which plays chords on the downbeat (Ex. 3.3).

THEME A2

The musical score for Theme A2, measures 22-24, is presented for Piano (Pno.) and Orchestra (Orch.). The Piano part begins with a *ff* dynamic and features a syncopated bass line in the left hand, with eighth notes played an octave ahead of the right hand's chords. The Orchestra part begins with a *f* dynamic and features a syncopated bass line in the left hand, with eighth notes played an octave ahead of the right hand's chords. The score is written in 12/8 and 9/8 time signatures, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The Piano part includes a tritone transposition in measure 24, centered on A^b.

Ex. 3.3 - Vargas, Concerto, I mvt., mm. 22-24

This pattern, four measures in length, is again transposed up a tritone. In m. 36, there is an important arrival point in which the orchestra ends the chain of sequences on unison B^b. This is the most evident harmonic arrival point of the composition up to this moment. Following that, the piano presents Theme A¹ twice, each statement a tritone apart, while the orchestra continues the pedal note B^b (Ex. 3.4).

The image shows a musical score for measures 35-38. The top system is for the piano, and the bottom system is for the orchestra. The piano part features Theme A1, which is transposed up a tritone. The orchestra part features a pedal note B^b. The score includes dynamic markings like *pp* and *sfz*, and a tritone interval is highlighted.

Ex. 3.4 - Vargas, Concerto, I mvt., mm. 35-38

A new presentation of the opening cadenza for solo piano in its original chordal disposition occurs in m. 53, but this time it is transposed up a perfect fifth. B^b, established since m. 36, acts as the pitch center; however, it now functions as a dominant. Following this cadenza, there is a bridge (*Andante tranquillo* ♩ = 72) which leads to the second theme (or Theme B) and establishes the tonality of E^b Major. The change of key signature in m. 57 makes this harmonic transformation evident.

Theme B is of a more lyrical character and less motivic than the themes of group A. It is much more diatonic, and melodically conceived. Because of its lyrical quality, this section is rhythmically less active, and steadier than the previous one. Also, the meter remains unchanged, as opposed to the constant meter shifts of the preceding section.

The theme is first presented by the cellos starting in m. 61, and it is a period of eight measures, comprising two phrases. The initial measures of that period are showed in Ex. 3.5. Theme B tends to move primarily in a descending motion; the soloist accompanies, both hands an octave apart, with the same melodic contour featured in the bridge of mm. 57-60. This accompaniment is built on the two basic motives; the first three notes suggest the open disposition of the initial chord of the leitmotiv and the chromatic motive is derived from the top voice of the same pattern.



Ex. 3.5 -Vargas, Concerto, I mvt., mm. 60-62

The basic progression of Theme B is clear in its harmonic function. It can be outlined in the following way:

THEME B
Vle.

p espressivo

mf

$E^b M = I$ bVI^6 $vii^{\circ 4}_3 (of V)$ I

$V^9_7 (of V)$ $b9$ V^6_4 $\frac{5}{3}$ I

Ex. 3.6 -Vargas, Concerto, I mvt., mm. 61-68, harmonic sketch.

The piano supports the harmonic structure with the figuration described above. The use of the bVI harmony, that takes place for the first time in this progression, will be of great importance throughout the composition, since it is one of the composer's favorite cadential routines. The theme ends on an imperfect authentic cadence in m. 68, setting up its restatement by the soloist in m. 69. The piano features the theme in the top voice, but continues with the triplet figuration. The strings accompany this second statement of the theme, presenting fragments of the chromatic motive both in its original descending motion and in inversion. Although, generally speaking, the texture in this section is homophonic, the figuration in the strings adds a simple countermelody to the theme.

The theme is presented by the soloist almost intact, except that the cadence to I is avoided at the end of the period. Instead, the composer prolongs the pre-dominant harmony in a brief episode (mm. 77-84). The authentic cadence will not be reached until m. 85, when the theme is

presented once more. This time, the orchestra presents the harmonic outline of the theme, rather than the melodic design. Strings and woodwinds alternate with brass in an antiphonal succession of chords, while the piano plays octaves in ascending motion. (Ex. 3.7)

The image displays a musical score for a piano piece, labeled 'Ex. 3.7'. The tempo is marked 'Maestoso' with a quarter note equal to 80 beats (♩ = 80). The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The upper system consists of two staves, both marked 'mf staccato'. The right hand plays a series of triplets, while the left hand plays octaves. The lower system also consists of two staves, marked 'ff'. The right hand plays octaves, and the left hand plays a series of triplets. The score is divided into three measures, each containing a triplet in the right hand and octaves in the left hand. The first measure ends with a '8va.....' marking, indicating an octave shift. The second measure also ends with a '8va.....' marking. The third measure ends with a '8va.....' marking. The score is written in a standard musical notation style, with notes, rests, and dynamic markings clearly visible.

Ex. 3.7 -Vargas, Concerto, I mvt., mm. 85-87

This closing statement of Theme B ends in a deceptive cadence on *b*VI, spelled enharmonically and transformed into an augmented chord on B in m. 93. Following this cadential *b*VI chord, the longest cadenza of the movement occurs, which actually corresponds to the development section of the sonata-form plan. As such, the cadenza combines and develops material from Themes A and B and is very sequential. At the beginning of the cadenza, E^b acts as the tonal goal, but in m.106 (*Adagio*) there is a modulation to D^b Major, obviously established by the change of key signature. This tonality will prevail until m. 116, where a new presentation of the initial leitmotiv begins (mm. 116-118); the composer again changes the key signature (no

accidentals). The leitmotiv is centered on B^b, and it features some register transfers (Ex. 3.8).

The use of B^b as the pitch center from this point on will prepare the retransition to the key of E^b.



Ex. 3.8 -Vargas, Concerto, I mvt., mm. 116-118

Following the conclusion of the soloist's cadenza, the recapitulation starts in m. 120 when the orchestra resumes. Theme A¹ is presented at its original pitch level, and it corresponds to mm. 5-8 of the exposition. This time, Theme A¹ is much more contrapuntal than in the original statement. The theme is stated four times: bassoons start in m. 120 and the orchestral texture gradually increases. Although B^b remains as the pitch center, it now has a clear dominant function.

In mm. 136-151, there is an episode that combines motives from Themes A¹ and B (*Giocoso* ♩ = 160). The key of E^b is once again established by the change of key signature. Soloist and orchestra establish a dialogue alternating both themes. Also, the meter repeatedly shifts between 9/8 and 4/4. Theme A² is restated in mm. 152-163, with the same pitch content featured in the exposition. However, there is an important rhythmic change. The syncopation in the piano part that characterized the first presentation of this theme (m. 22 onward) is no longer present.

Instead, the bass line is placed on the downbeats and the chords on the upbeats. Also, the meter has changed to 4/4 and 3/4 as opposed to the 12/8 and 9/8 of the exposition.

After a sudden pause in m. 163, the opening of the leitmotiv is played by the orchestra, and the soloist interrupts with a cadenza-like arpeggiation. This leads to a short bridge in mm. 166-171 (very similar to the bridge in mm. 47-52), which is a prolongation of the dominant harmony, preparing the closing material of the movement. Theme B is finally restated in mm. 172 in its original key (E^b Major). According to Vargas' own account of the piece, this section would correspond to the coda of the movement.³ Similar to mm. 85-92, it also restates the basic harmonic progression, rather than the melodic design of Theme B. The eight-measure period is presented by the orchestra only once, in a calmer mood, while the piano complements with fairly simple arpeggios. The meter has changed from the original statement in m. 61, since it is now presented in C meter, as opposed to the original 4/4. In a closing gesture, the piano continues the arpeggiated figuration in the last eight measures on a pedal note in the tonic. The general structure of this movement is outlined in Table 3.1.

Movement II: Andante

The second movement of the Concerto (*Andante* $\text{♩} = 80$) is cast in three very distinct sections. Although it follows the sonata-form principle more closely than the previous movement, its structure also varies somewhat from traditional sonata-form. The contrast that the composer intended between this movement and the first, however, is very clear. The diatonic

³ Mayer-Serra, 1027. See page 19.

Table 3.1 - Structure of Vargas' Concerto, Movement I

mm.	Event	Pitch center
EXPOSITION		
1-4	Cadenza - Leitmotiv (Piano)	E ^b
5-18	Theme A ¹ (Orchestra)	
19-22	Bridge (Orchestra)	E
23-36	Theme A ² (Piano and Orch.)	
37-46	Theme A ¹ (Piano and Orch.)	B ^b
47-52	Bridge (Piano and Orch.)	
53-56	Cadenza - Leitmotiv (Piano)	
57-60	Bridge (Piano)	
61-93	Theme B (Piano and Orch.)	E ^b Major
DEVELOPMENT		
94-119	Cadenza (Piano)	B ^b / D ^b
RECAPITULATION		
120-135	Theme A ¹ (Orchestra)	B ^b
136-151	Episode (Piano and Orch.)	E ^b / E
152-163	Theme A ² (Piano and Orch.)	
164-171	Bridge (Piano and Orch.)	B ^b
172-186	Coda - Theme B (Piano and Orch.)	E ^b Major

orientation, strong homophonic texture and metric regularity of the *Andante* contrast sharply with the chromaticism, rhythmic drive and changing meters of the first movement. Usually, the melodic lines progress in ascending motion, as opposed to the melodic behavior of the first movement. Nevertheless, the rather peaceful ending of the first movement creates a smooth transition to the *Andante*. About this movement, Mario Alfaro-Güell comments:

The repose of the second movement is announced towards the end of the first one, bringing back the seriousness of the initial motive, which actually will reappear in

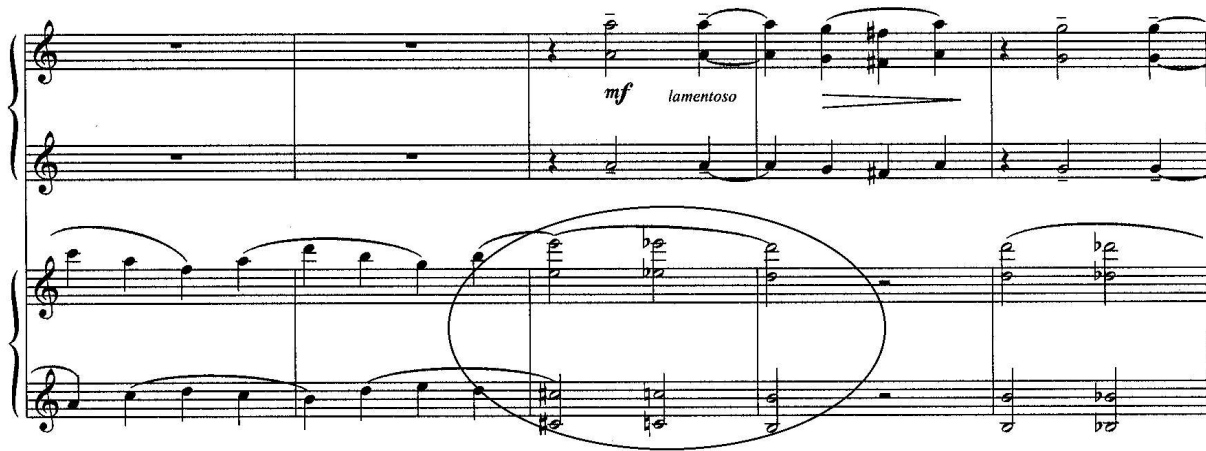
the second movement in the soloist's cadenza. This feature gives the piece not only continuity and coherence, but also contrast, in a work that reveals a clever and efficient use of the thematic material.⁴

The second movement is in the key of C Major, providing a minor-third relationship with the tonal center of the first movement (E^b). The first theme, very diatonic in nature, is an eight-measure period in 4/4 meter, moving mainly by stepwise motion. The harmonic progression of this theme is conventional: the first half of the period ends on a half cadence in the tonic, and the period finishes with an authentic cadence, embellished by a contrapuntal plagal cadence. It is introduced by the orchestra in a choral-like texture (mm. 1-8) and then repeated by the soloist (mm. 9-16, *cantabile*). The piano writing of this first theme is presented with an arpeggiated figuration while the orchestra accompanies with a rather simple counterpoint (Ex. 3.9). In mm. 15-16, the second statement of the theme has the indication *poco rall.*, to emphasize the harmonic closure of the phrase.

Ex. 3.9 - Vargas, *Concerto*, II mvt., mm. 8-11

⁴ Alfaro, 12.

The orchestra continues in m. 17 (*a tempo*) with a simple developmental episode of the theme. The soloist joins again in m. 22 and a sequential dialog between piano and orchestra is presented in m. 27 (*lamentoso*). Significantly, the motive that the orchestra is featuring is the descending chromatic line, characteristic of the first movement (Ex. 3.10).



Ex. 3.10 - Vargas, Concerto, II mvt., mm. 25-29

Unlike the previous phrases, mm. 17-33 do not exhibit a clear harmonic closure and end with a deceptive cadence in m. 33 (vii^{o7} in the key of G Major). In fact, G Major (until now, the dominant harmony) will become the tonic of the next section. From m. 34 on, there is an extended piano solo (*Più mosso-poco accelerando*).⁵ This cadenza is nothing other than a prolongation of the key of D Major (the dominant of the new key). It begins as an antiphonal two-voice counterpoint based on a four-note ascending pattern (mm. 34-37), leading to a chain of parallel thirds in the right hand, based on the same motive (mm. 38-41). The sequence then

⁵ The composer designated this section as *solo*. In the first manuscript the indication *Cadenza* appears in brackets.

descends by stepwise motion (mm. 42-45). Up to this point, the cadenza has barlines and the 4/4 meter remains unaltered. In m. 46, the composer presents, for the first time in the movement, unbarred cadenza-like writing, whose length would be the approximate equivalent of 12 measures in the precedent meter. This free section is entirely based on a ninth-chord on D, and ends with a brilliant ascending D Major scale in both hands, passing through four and half octaves, leading to the statement of the new theme.

The second theme or Theme B (*Cantabile* ♩ = 92), in G Major, although very diatonic and lyrical in character, is yet more stately than the first theme and it is a parallel period. The melody is presented chordally in the right hand, while the left hand accompanies, also with chords. By contrast to the first theme, the melody is introduced by the piano, and then restated by the orchestra. The first four measures of the theme are presented in Ex. 3.11.

Ex. 3.11 - Vargas, Concerto, II mvt., mm. 47-51

After a short melodic link in mm. 61-62 (an ascending G Major scale in the strings), the full orchestra presents the second theme, and the piano accompanies with ascending arpeggios and octaves. Once more, the composer makes use of the chromatic descending motive of the first movement, now as a contrapuntal device, in the orchestra part (Ex. 3.12).



Ex. 3.12 - Vargas, Concerto, II mvt., mm. 63-66

Up to now, the piece has fulfilled the characteristics of the exposition section of a conventional sonata-form movement. Two distinctive themes have been clearly stated, one in the tonic and one in the dominant. A new section (which would correspond to the development) starts in m. 77, where the second statement of the theme is suddenly interrupted by a dominant seventh chord in third inversion on E^b. The soloist presents this chord twice in arpeggiation, followed by a cadenza that features the leitmotiv, this time on G.⁶ The presence of the leitmotiv in the second movement, and also later in the final movement, confirms the cyclic nature of the composition. The leitmotiv is presented in transposition, now using G as its tonal center, but unaltered in its intervallic content (mm. 79-82). The metric stability of the movement is also broken by its alternation of 6/4, 9/4 and 4/4. A short *Recitativo* follows (m. 83), based on the final chord of the leitmotiv (Ex. 3.13). In this unaccompanied passage, the interval of tritone is

⁶ Once more, the composer wrote *cadenza breve*, in brackets, in the first manuscript, but it does not appear in the second version.

once more reinforced. Although G is still the tonal center, it now acts again as the dominant of the tonic key C Major. Immediately after the *Recitativo*, there is an episode (*Animato* ♩=120) that functions as the retransition to the recapitulation. Written for orchestra alone, this episode is very sequential; it is based on a strong pedal tone G, announced by a timpani roll marked *ppp*.

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system is for piano, with a treble and bass staff. The piano part is labeled 'Recitativo' and features a melodic line in the treble and a bass line in the bass. The second system is for orchestra, with a treble and bass staff. The orchestral part is labeled 'Animato ♩ = 120'. It features a timpani roll in the bass staff marked 'ppp' and a brass section in the treble staff marked 'f'.

Ex. 3.13 - Vargas, Concerto, II mvt., mm. 83-86

In mm. 98-104 (*Meno mosso* ♩ = 76) there is a restatement of the episode mm. 27-33; however, this time the phrase does not end on a deceptive cadence as had occurred in m. 33. Instead, there is an ascending motive of three-notes by the orchestra (*Lento*), imitating the previous phrase in the piano part. This foreshadows the actual recapitulation of the first theme (m. 105), in the tonic key of C Major (*Tempo I* ♩ = 80). The theme is now presented by the orchestra in the upper register, while the piano accompanies with bell-like descending octaves (Ex. 3.14).

The musical score for Vargas, Concerto, II mvt., mm. 105-109, is presented in two systems. The first system features a piano part (treble and bass clef) and a string part (treble and bass clef). The piano part begins with a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a series of eighth notes. The string part starts with a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a series of eighth notes. The tempo changes from Lento to Tempo I. The dynamics are marked *mf* and *pp*. The string part is marked *legato*. The piano part is marked **THEME A**.

Ex. 3.14 - Vargas, Concerto, II mvt., mm. 105-109

In mm. 115-122 there is another restatement of the episode of mm. 27-33, but this time it is syncopated, both in the orchestra and the solo part. It is also in a different key (a perfect fourth down) in order to arrive at the tonic key of C Major. In mm. 123-129, the restatement of the second theme occurs, now in the tonic key (C Major), thus fulfilling the harmonic requirement of the sonata-form principle. The second theme is now presented in a more serene and reflective mood, *Più lento* ♩ = 72, in which the soloist establishes a melodic dialogue with a solo cello.

The last four measures of the movement function as a short coda, entirely built on the C Major harmony. The piano presents ascending chords in C Major, marked *pp*, while the strings *in divisi* support the harmony with chords in the higher register.

The overall form of this second movement can be expressed in the following table:

Table 3.2 - Structure of Vargas' Concerto, Movement II

mm.	Event	Key area
EXPOSITION		
1-8	Theme A (Orchestra)	C Major
9-16	Theme A (Piano and Orch.)	
17-33	Episode 1 (Piano and Orch.)	
34-46	Cadenza 1 (Piano)	D (pedal point)
47-61	Theme B (Piano)	G Major
61-62	Link (Orchestra)	
63-77	Theme B (Piano and Orch.)	
DEVELOPMENT		
78-83	Cadenza 2 - Recitativo (Piano)	
84-97	Episode 2 (Orchestra)	G (pedal point)
98-104	Episode 1 (Piano and Orch.)	C Major
RECAPITULATION		
105-114	Theme A (Piano and Orch.)	C Major (continued)
115-122	Episode 1 (Piano and Orch.)	
123-129	Theme B (Piano and Orch.)	
129-132	Coda (Piano and Orch.)	

Movement III: Allegro Molto

The final movement of Vargas' concerto is structured in the form of a passacaglia. The use of the passacaglia form as a part of a piano concerto is indeed unusual and original.⁷ It also reveals Vargas' knowledge of and interest in traditional means of composition.

⁷ Roberto Vargas affirms that his father presented his Concerto to the renowned pianist Claudio Arrau during a visit of the Chilean artist to Costa Rica in the 1950's. The pianist did not show any real interest in the composition, but remarked the fact that it was probably the first and only piano concerto (at least to Arrau's knowledge) to include a movement in form of a *passacaglia*.

The Norton/Grove Concise Encyclopedia of Music defines *passacaglia* as:

a standard type of ritornello for a category of 17th-century Spanish, French or Italian song. Most 'ritornello-passacaglias' used the harmonic progression I-IV-V-(I) in either major or minor, duple or triple to match the song. In the second quarter of the century the passacaglia began to be used as the basis for variations for guitar, voice and continuo, keyboard instruments and chamber groups... The Classical and Romantic periods produced very few passacaglias (the finale of Brahms' Fourth Symphony is often cited as one); but as a set of variations on a ground bass, and often with Bach's organ passacaglia as a model, the title has been used by 20th-century composers.⁸

Since Vargas was also an organist, he was undoubtedly familiar with Bach's organ music. Bach's Organ Passacaglia in C Minor, BWV 582, was perhaps a strong source of inspiration for Vargas' own passacaglia. Another model could have been Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini Op. 43*, also composed of twenty-four variations, although on a much larger scale.⁹ Several of the rhythmic motives in some of the variations certainly resemble Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody* (for instance, the rhythmic patterns in Variations II, V, VIII and XVI). In addition, some harmonic progressions found in Vargas' Concerto, particularly the use of *bVI*, are also characteristic of Rachmaninoff's style.

Vargas's passacaglia adheres to the basic harmonic progression of the original Baroque form (as defined above), embellished with contrapuntal harmonies. Also, as the movement develops, some other distinctive harmonies are featured. The movement is in the key E^b

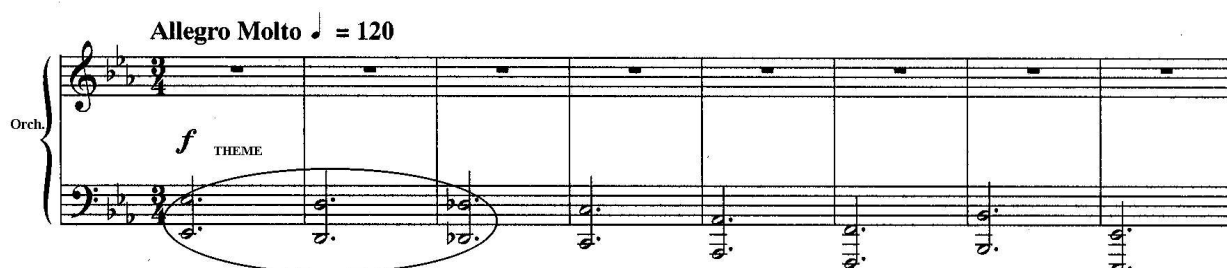
⁸ Stanley Sadie, ed. *The Norton/Grove Concise Encyclopedia of Music* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994), S. v. "Passacaglia," 600.

⁹ It is clear that Vargas was familiar with Rachmaninoff's music, since he wrote an *Elegy* to his memory only a year before the composition of the Concerto. See Appendix A.

Major and in 3/4 meter (*Allegro molto* ♩ = 120). It is built entirely on a bass line of eight notes (one per measure) and twenty-four variations based on the implied harmonic framework.

The theme (mm. 1-8) is presented by the horns and trombones in unison. In this outline, all the pitches but one — the B^b — move in descending motion: E^b- D - D^b- C- A^b- F- B^b - E^b.

Not surprisingly, the first notes of the theme replicate the descending chromatic motive that has been an essential characteristic of the previous movements (Ex. 3.15).



Ex. 3.15 - Vargas, Concerto, III mvt., mm. 1-8

The tonic key prevails throughout the movement. In fact, although the composer also works with modal mixture, there are no significant changes of key areas. Due to the nature of the theme, the composer based the diversity of this set of variations on changes of texture, instrumentation and rhythmic patterns. Also, because of the relative brevity of the main theme, the variations seem to be conceived in groups, oftentimes in pairs. Table 3.3 classifies groups of variations according to their relationship.

Table 3.3 - Structure of Vargas' Concerto, Movement III

mm.	Variations	Remarks
1-16	Theme and Var. I	Introduction (Orchestra.)
17-48	II - V	Piano entrance, rhythmically active
49-64	VI - VII	Solo Orchestra, strings <i>sul ponticello</i> .
65-80	VIII - IX	Triplet figuration, contrary motion
81-96	X – XI	Tempo change, displaced accents
97-112	XII – XIII	Tempo change, chordal
113-144	XIV – XVII	Tempo change, contrapuntal
145-152	XVIII	Orchestra, bridge, deceptive cadence
153-161	<i>Cadenza</i>	Leitmotiv
162-179	XIX – XXI	Meter change, themes from Mvt. I
180-200	XXII – XXIV	Theme B from Mvt. II, Coda.

The first variation is written for woodwinds, trumpet and strings. The timpani join in the last two measures, to reinforce the cadence of the phrase. The theme is outlined by bassoons, cellos and double basses, while the remaining instruments present repeated chords featuring the basic harmonic structure:

$$\begin{array}{cccccccc}
 \text{mm.} & 9 & 10 & 11 & 12 & 13 & 14 & 15 & 16 \\
 E^b M = [& I & - & V^6 - & V^2(\text{of IV}) - & IV^6 - & ii^6 - & ii^7 - & V^7 - I]
 \end{array}$$

The basic harmonic progression I- IV- V- I that characterizes the Baroque passacaglia form is clearly recognizable. The V^6 and V^2 (of IV) chords in mm. 10-11 function as passing chords from I to IV; the ii^6 and ii^7 harmonies in mm. 13-14 are a prolongation of the subdominant harmony that lead to the perfect authentic cadence in mm. 15-16.

The soloist joins in Var. II (mm. 17-24) with a sequence based on a two-measure pattern of chords and an ascending chromatic scale. The orchestra accompanies with *pizzicato* strings and woodwinds in repeated patterns of sixteenth notes. The theme is featured by the bassoons and violas. In Var. III (mm. 25-32), woodwinds and *pizzicato* strings present the theme in unison (with some rhythmic modifications), while the piano (marked *martellato*) introduces a variant of the harmonic progression: a modal mixture that includes the *b*VI chord, embellished with chromatic neighbors. The piano's figuration also presents the descending three-note pattern (Ex. 3.16).

VAR. III δ^{wa}

The musical score for Example 3.16 is a piano part for measures 25-28 of the third movement of Vargás's Concerto. It is in 3/4 time and features a piano part with a descending three-note pattern and a martellato texture. The score is written for piano and includes a variety of musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Ex. 3.16 - Vargás, Concerto, III mvt., mm. 25-28

The piano part in Var. IV (mm. 33-40) is once again a sequence of two-measure patterns, this time based on a descending chromatic scale and an ascending arpeggiation of a fully diminished chord. Bassoons and flutes alternate playing ascending chromatic scales in minor

thirds, while the strings provide harmonic support. The theme is presented by oboes, clarinets, and second violins. This variation ends in E^b minor, and then again, the timpani enter in the last two measures to emphasize the harmonic closure of the phrase. Var. V (mm. 41-48) is clearly in the minor mode; the orchestra (strings, clarinets and flutes) alternates with the piano (*marcato*) and muted trumpets in the presentation of the theme, now based on chords embellished with lower neighbor tones (Ex. 3.17).

VAR. V

The musical score for Variation V, measures 41-44, is presented in a three-staff format. The top staff is for the piano (p) and the bottom staff is for the maraca (marcato). The piano part begins with a fortissimo (ff) dynamic and features a series of chords and single notes. The maraca part is marked marcato and features a series of chords and single notes. The score includes a variety of musical notations such as chords, single notes, and rests.

Ex. 3.17 - Vargas, Concerto, III mvt., mm. 41-44

Var. VI and VII (mm. 49-56), for the orchestra alone, are conceived as a pair. In Var. VI, the theme is presented in the high register by flutes and violins while the violas, cellos and basses play an ascending chromatic scale, *sul ponticello*. Var. VII is a contrapuntal inversion of the previous variation: the theme is presented by clarinets (replacing the flutes), second violins and cellos *sul tasto* in the low register, while the first violins and violas play the ascending chromatic scale in the high register, again *sul ponticello*.

Var. VIII and IX (mm. 65-80) are also intended to be a pair. The piano re-enters in Var. VIII with a triplet figuration, in which the last eighth-note of the triplet group is a rest. The same rhythmic pattern is featured in the strings. Bassoons and violins present an ascending E^b Major scale, doubled in the top line of the piano part, while the theme is presented in the cello and bass. This variation ends with an imperfect authentic cadence, giving the feeling of continuation into the following variation, which is also based on the ascending chromatic scale motive against the ground bass line. The piano figuration has changed from incomplete triplets to sixteenth notes and the ascending major scale is featured in the outer voices of the piano part. The orchestration is full (with the exception of flute and piccolo), and the theme of the passacaglia is presented by bassoons, trombones, violas, cellos and basses.

Var. X (mm. 81-88) presents the first tempo change of the movement and it is marked *Agitato* ♩. = 52 (which corresponds to ♩ = 156, compared to the previous ♩ = 120). The theme is presented in the cello part (*pizzicato*) and the left hand of the piano. The right hand of the piano and the violins (*pizzicato*) present an intricate chromatic counterpoint, mainly in thirds. In Var. XI (mm. 89-96), the right hand of the piano part has an arpeggiated figuration that delineates the basic harmonic progression, while the left hand crosses over to play the theme in the highest register of the instrument on the third beat of every measure. Flutes and clarinets accompany with arpeggios in contrary motion, and oboes support with chords (Ex. 3.18).



Ex. 3.18 - Vargas, Concerto, III mvt., mm. 89-92

Var. XII (mm. 97-104) presents a slight tempo change, *Meno mosso* ♩ = 144. It is written for *tutti* orchestra without the soloist. Unlike the previous variations, this one begins in C minor, and that key can be heard as the tonic until m. 102, when E^b Major prevails again:

mm.	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104
C m =	[i – V – iv (of iv) – IV – iv							
	E ^b M = ii – V ^{5/4} – I]							

The theme, however, remains unaltered and can be found in the woodwind section, third trumpet and first violin.

Var. XIII (mm. 105-112) presents another tempo change, *Maestoso* ♩ = 126. The theme is presented by the first and second violins (in alternation) and the flutes. Vargas uses an enharmonic spelling in mm. 105 and 107 (D[#] instead of E^b, and C[#] instead of D^b). The piano responds with chords in the upbeats of every measure. In the first four measures of the variation,

the composer uses the chords of B Major, D Major, A Major and C Major, and in m. 109 resumes the tonal function in E^b Major, although with some changes. He replaces the [ii⁶ - ii⁷ - V⁷ - I] cadential routine of the basic progression with [ii^{o2} - vii^o - V⁷ - I] (Ex. 3.19).

VAR. XIII Maestoso ♩ = 126

Ex. 3.19 - Vargas, Concerto, III mvt., mm. 105-108

Var. XIV (mm. 113-120) returns to the original tempo (♩ = 120) although it is now marked *Allegretto* and not *Allegro molto*, as in the beginning. With this indication, it is clear that Vargas intends a change of character, rather than a change of tempo, since this variation is more melodic than the previous ones. It is a solo for cello and clarinet; the cello plays the theme while the clarinet answers with a simple sequential counterpoint (Ex. 3.20).

Ex. 3.20 - Vargas, Concerto, III mvt., mm. 113-116

Var. XV (mm. 121-128) is for solo piano and bassoons. The bassoons present the theme of the passacaglia while the piano moves chromatically in contrary motion in a pointillistic manner. The theme can also be recognized in the downbeats of the piano figuration. In Var. XVI (mm. 129-136), the piano presents a toccata-like figuration based on arpeggios. The violins accompany with arpeggios and the violas with chords, while the cellos and basses present the theme.

In Var. XVII (mm. 137-144), there is another tempo change, $\text{♩} = 138$, marked *Allegro*.¹⁰ The piano presents ascending major scales in octaves (in E^b Major) while the orchestra (strings, bassoons and trumpets) accompany with syncopated arpeggios. The theme is not presented in its original form by any of the instruments; however, the harmonic structure remains intact. Var. XVIII (mm. 145-152) for *tutti* orchestra without the soloist is rather straightforward. The theme is clearly recognizable in the outer voices. The final gesture of this variation is not an authentic but a deceptive cadence on *b*VI, a harmonic procedure that the composer had already used in the first movement of the Concerto (I, m. 91-92). This abrupt change of course leads to a new cadenza for piano solo (mm. 153-159). The soloist begins this cadenza with reminiscences of Var. XIV, and then continues with the leitmotiv of the first and second movements (*Adagio* $\text{♩} = 84$), this time with a more extended sequence at the end.

Var. XIX (mm. 162-169), for woodwinds, is marked *Vivace* $\text{♩} = 160$. It is based on motive A¹ of the first movement (I, m. 5) but with a meter alteration. The theme of the passacaglia is presented by the bassoons (Ex. 3.21).

¹⁰ It is marked *Allegro marcato* in the first version, but only *Allegro* in the second manuscript.

Var. XXI (mm. 178-9) is simply a final gesture before the last three variations, which are the culmination of the movement and the Concerto. The theme is presented by the brass instruments in unison, and all the pitches of the theme (with the exception of the last E^b) have been compressed into a single measure. The piano presents an ascending dominant scale.¹¹ It is followed by a short pause before the last statements of the theme (Ex. 3.23).

The image shows a musical score for Variation XXI, 'Meno mosso' (♩ = 80). The score is in 3/4 time and features a piano part with a circled ascending dominant scale in the first measure, followed by a short pause and then a final statement of the theme. The brass part (represented by a single staff) plays a compressed theme in unison. The score includes markings for 'rit.', 'f', 'cresc.', and 'ff'.

Ex. 3.23 - Vargas, Concerto, III mvt., mm. 178-179

Var. XXII and XXIII (mm. 180-195), *Moderato* ♩ = 108, present a meter change to 4/4, and are based on Theme B of the second movement (first measures presented in Ex. 3.24). In order to present the latter in its original form, the length of two variations is used to correspond to the parallel period of Theme B (sixteen measures). Therefore, Var. XXII does not complete the authentic cadence of the passacaglia's harmonic progression; instead, this variation is connected to the next one through a half cadence in the tonic. In m. 194-195, the piano part also suggests

¹¹ It is actually an E^b Major scale which starts and ends on the pitch B^b. It fulfills a clear dominant function.

the motive used in Var. XX. In Var. XXII and XXIII, the melody is in the higher register, while the theme is presented in the lower instruments. In the meantime, the piano accompanies with a new counterpoint that also features the descending chromatic four-note pattern.

VAR. XXII 8^{va}
Moderato
ff
8^{va}
THEME B, II mov.
3

Ex. 3.24 - Vargas, Concerto, III mvt., mm. 180-184

The final variation is based on the superimposition of the theme of the passacaglia and an ascending E^b Major scale. The piano accompanies with rapid arpeggios featuring the basic harmonic progression. A plagal cadence in m. 197 (iv^o – I) provides final closure to the piece (Ex. 3.25). The presence of the pitch C^b in the iv^o of the final cadence certainly provides a final echo of the bVI harmony that has been very significant in the prior movements.

8^{va} | VAR. XXIV

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows a piano part with a treble staff and a bass staff. The piano part features a melodic line with triplets and a bass line. The second system continues the piano part and adds an orchestra part with a treble staff and a bass staff. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (ff, f, fff, sfz), articulation (accents), and performance instructions (rit., 8va, 8vb).

Ex. 3.25 - Vargas, *Concerto*, III mvt., mm. 191-193

Summary

Vargas' *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* is an eclectic work that combines modern and traditional elements. Although it would be problematical to ascribe it to a definite artistic current, it can be considered an example of musical Neo-Classicism due to its significant references to traditional genres and forms, in particular the inclusion of a movement in the form of a passacaglia. The contrast that the composer intended between different themes and/or

movements is well achieved. The distinction and combination of chromatic and diatonic passages, as well as of rhythmic and melodic sections, is properly accomplished.

The piece is well orchestrated; there are important passages for the soloist and for the orchestra, and both alternate in accompanying or solo gestures. The instrumentation corresponds to that of a conventional Romantic piano concerto and it does not overshadow the soloist's performance. The Concerto is also well proportioned; the structure of the phrases is always symmetrical. The numerical relation (in terms of number of measures) among the three movements is 186:132:200.

The Concerto is, undoubtedly, a cyclic composition. It is clear that the composer uses the same thematic material interchangeably throughout the whole Concerto. The fact that Vargas managed very cleverly to incorporate themes from previous movements within the harmonic framework of the passacaglia, as well as the presence of the four-note descending pattern as the beginning gesture of the passacaglia's theme, suggests the possibility that this melodic and harmonic skeleton was indeed the genesis of all the themes in the Concerto.

CHAPTER FOUR

PERFORMANCE AND PEDAGOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF VARGAS' CONCERTO

The previous chapter offered a thorough formal analysis of Vargas' Piano Concerto. It can be concluded from that study that Vargas' composition was skillfully written, following the archetype of the traditional Romantic piano concerto. A few performance and pedagogical matters that may be encountered in the piece will now be discussed.

Vargas's Concerto is a very accessible composition for the listener. One of the most notable characteristics of the piece is that the orchestration is effectively balanced with the piano. The orchestral writing is clearly minimized when the soloist performs an important section or motive. However, there are three particular places in the piece that should be carefully managed. They occur in mm. 21-30 and mm. 152-159 in the first movement, and mm. 8-16 in the second movement. In these three instances, both the soloist and the orchestra play in the same register; therefore, the soloist should try to bring the themes to the surface more clearly. Of particular importance is the example in the second movement, since the soloist is presenting the first theme of the movement accompanied by the strings. It may be effective to reduce the number of players in the string section throughout these eight measures in order to achieve more clarity and a better balance.

Another advantage of Vargas' instrumentation is that the orchestral parts are not very complex. Therefore, the piece can be performed by orchestras of average ability. Unfortunately, the orchestral parts are not in print yet and they are in custody of the composer's family in Costa

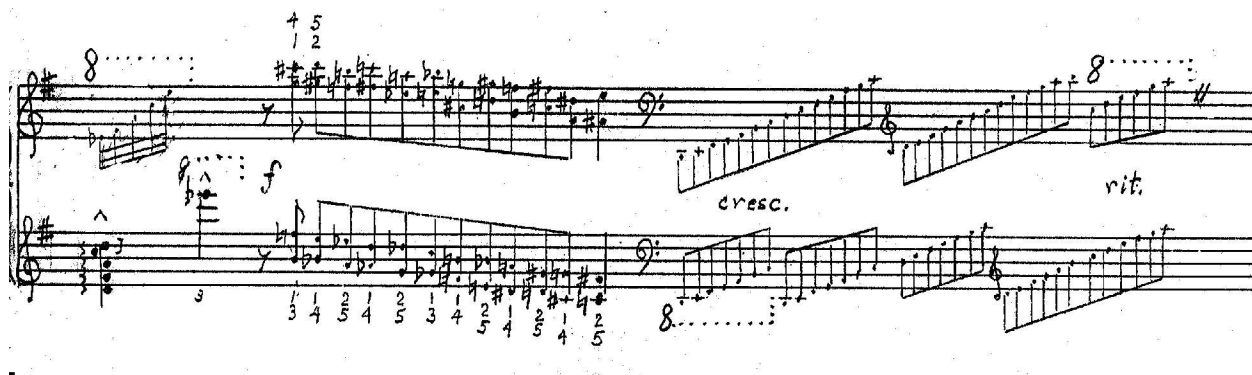
Rica. On the other hand, the arrangement of the orchestra part for a second piano, made by the composer himself, follows the original score very closely. In the performance edition found in this monograph, a basic guide to the instrumentation has been added in the second piano part.

The work is very clear in its overall structure and is pianistically conceived. Although the Concerto is not extremely demanding in terms of pianistic technique, it shows the composer's intimate acquaintance with the instrument. This Concerto can be suitable for an early-advanced student, perhaps as a preparatory piece for one of the mainstream Romantic concertos.

Regarding its form, it is a very interesting piece to study, since it deals with unusual compositional techniques, such as cyclic form and variation. The approximate performance time of Vargas' Concerto is 22 minutes, which is of moderate length compared to the standard concertos, and makes it appropriate for pedagogical purposes.

In the score, the tempo changes are precisely stated by the composer with both frequent metronome markings and traditional designations of tempo. On the other hand, Vargas does not offer any indications concerning pedaling or fingering. There is only one instance, in which the composer annotated fingering; this is for a small segment in the cadenza of the second movement. Example 4.1 shows this fingering by Vargas, reproduced in his own handwriting.

Finally, Table 4.1 offers an inventory of the basic technical problems or difficulties found in the Concerto. It is presented here as a guide for didactic purposes



Ex. 4.1 - Vargas, Concerto, II mvt., Cadenza

Table 4.1 – Technical problems in Vargas’ Concerto

Technical difficulty	Movement	Measures or Event
Octaves	I	79-82, 85-92, 136-148
	II	Cadenza, 105-113, 123-128
	III	Var. XVII, XX, XXII, XXIII
Chords	I	Initial cadenza, 79-81, 83- 84, 152-159
	II	Cadenza, 129-132
	III	Var. II, V, VIII, IX, XII, cadenza
Fast scales	II	Cadenza
	III	Var. XXI
Chromatic scales	I	Cadenza
	II	46
	III	Var. IV
Thirds	II	Cadenza
Parallel Fourths	I	37-45
	II	Cadenza

Table 4.1 (continued)

Arpeggios	I	172-86
	II	Cadenza
	III	Var. IV, XI, XVI, XXIV
Syncopated patterns	I	23-30
	II	115-121
Hands crossing	III	Var. XXI
Hands in unison, an octave apart	I	59-68
	III	Var. IV, V
Accents	I	23-30
	III	Var. X
Melodic line in top voice	I	69-76
	II	8-16, 42-45

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APPENDIX A

A PERFORMANCE EDITION OF CARLOS ENRIQUE VARGAS' CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA

Due to the lack of a printed version, this appendix offers an edition of Carlos Enrique Vargas' *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*.. This edition was made with the permission of Roberto Enrique Vargas, son of the composer and custodian of his music. This version was based on the three manuscripts of the composition left by the composer: two versions for two pianos and a full score. The reduction of the orchestra for a second piano is by the composer and it is almost identical in both versions for two pianos.

None of the musical content, dynamic and tempo markings has been altered. Unless otherwise indicated, the few fingering and pedal suggestions in the soloist's part, as well as the instrumentation cues given in the second piano score, are editorial and they do not appear in the composer's original manuscript. The indications in parenthesis are either by the composer or indicate a marking that appears in only one of Vargas' manuscripts. All other editorial suggestions are given in brackets. The following is a list of the abbreviations used in the instrumentation guide:

<i>Bsn.</i>	Bassoon(s)	<i>Cl</i>	Clarinet(s)
<i>Fl.</i>	Flute(s)	<i>Ob.</i>	Oboe(s)
<i>Picc.</i>	Piccolo	<i>Str.</i>	Strings
<i>Timp.</i>	Timpani	<i>Tpt.</i>	Trumpet(s)
<i>Vcl.</i>	Violoncello(s)	<i>Woodw.</i>	Woodwinds

Concierto para Piano y Orquesta

(1944)

CARLOS ENRIQUE VARGAS

(1919-1998)

Adagio ♩ = 84

Piano I (Solo)

f *rall.* *f* *rall.* *f*

Piano II (Orchestra)

(Cadenza breve)

molto rit.

Allegro ♩ = 160

p Ob., Bsn.

Fl.

12 1

I

II

f *Tutti*

//

15

I

II

//

18 $\text{♩} = \text{♩.}$

I

II

21

I

ff

21

II

24

I

24

II

27

I

27

II

4 2 1

5 2 1

1 5

1 4

ff

f

8^{va}

30

2

fff

mf

f

34

fff

pp

5 2 4 1 3

1 4 2 5 3 1 3

34

sfz

38

3

38

sfz

I

42 5 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 (cresc.)

II

//

I

46 3

mf

triquillo

Picc., Bsn. 3

sfz

p

II

//

Solo Adagio

51

f

rall.

II

(Cadenza breve)

55 *molto rit.* **Andante tranquillo** ♩ = 72

f *con fantasia*

8^{va}

Reo. *

II

58 *legato*

f *p* [m.d.]

Reo. *

II

61 **4**

Reo. simile

p *espressivo*

Vlc.

II

The image displays a musical score for the song "The Rose Tree". It is written for a voice part (labeled I) and a piano accompaniment (labeled II). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into two systems, each containing a vocal staff and a piano staff. The vocal staff includes lyrics and fingerings, while the piano staff provides harmonic support with triplets and chords. The score is marked with a double bar line at the beginning of the first system and a double bar line at the end of the second system. The piano part features a recurring triplet figure in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand.

91

I

II

rit. ...

f

rit. ...

sf

//

Solo

f

pp

presto

8^{va}

Cadenza

//

Allegro ♩ = 160

f

pp

I

98

rall.

accel.

3

3

II

98

// 8^{va}

I

103

3

ff

p

Adagio ♩ = 60

p

molto espressivo

3

1 2 3 1

5 3 1

2 1 2 5

II

103

//

I

107

3 1

4 3 1 3

1 2 4 2 4 2 3 4

5

2

Rea.

*

Rea.

*

Rea.

*

II

107

110

I

1 2 3 2 3 2 3 4

5

1 2 4 2 4 1 2 3

1 2 5

Rea * Rea * Rea * Rea

Rea * Rea *

II

//

113

I

Rea * Rea

Rea

cresc. ...

Rea *

II

//

116

I

ff

8^{va}

lento

3 3

Rea

Rea

Rea

Rea

3 Rea

II

//

I

p *prestissimo*

1

4

4

* [una corda]

II

//

I

[tre corde] *fff*

II

//

7

I

[m.d.]

sf

8^{vb}

8^{vb}

Allegro ♩ = 160

p *Bsns.*

II

137

I

Reo. *

Reo. simile

1 1 1 1
5 4 3 5

II

//

140 **8** **Allegro** ♩ = 160

I

II

f

3

8va

//

143

I

ff

II

mf

f

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with two staves labeled I and II.

System 1 (Measures 146-151):

- Staff I:** Treble clef. Measures 146-150 are rests. Measure 151 begins with a treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), and 3/8 time signature. Dynamics include *mf*.
- Staff II:** Treble and Bass clefs. Measures 146-150 contain complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and sixteenth notes. Measure 151 begins with a treble clef, key signature of one sharp, and 3/8 time signature. Dynamics include *mf* and *Tpt.*

System 2 (Measures 149-151):

- Staff I:** Treble and Bass clefs. Measure 149 is a rest. Measure 150 begins with a bass clef, key signature of one sharp, and 3/8 time signature. Dynamics include *p*. Measure 151 is a rest. A rehearsal mark *Reo.* is present below measure 150.
- Staff II:** Treble and Bass clefs. Measure 149 begins with a bass clef, key signature of one sharp, and 3/8 time signature. Dynamics include *f* and *Str.*. Measure 150 is a rest. Measure 151 begins with a bass clef, key signature of one sharp, and 3/8 time signature. Dynamics include *pp* and *Timp.*. A red line indicates a sustained sound. A dashed red line below measure 151 is labeled *8vb*.

System 3 (Measures 152-154):

- Staff I:** Bass clef. Measure 152 begins with a bass clef, key signature of one sharp, and 3/4 time signature. Dynamics include *ff*. Measures 153-154 continue the pattern with 3/4 time signature.
- Staff II:** Bass clef. Measure 152 begins with a bass clef, key signature of one sharp, and 3/4 time signature. Dynamics include *f*. Measures 153-154 continue the pattern with 3/4 time signature.

155

I

II

155

//

158

I

II

158

9

mf

8va

//

161

I

II

161

fff

fff

f

164

I

presto

8^{va} Red.

Adagio

164

Str. f *rall.*

II

//

8^{va} Red.

I

f Red.

Allegro ♩ = 160

f Red.

II

p tranquillo

Fl., Cl.

//

168

I

f Red.

II

168

p *rall.*

172 **Adagio** *legato sempre*

I

pp 3 3 3 3 3

leg.

II

172 *Str.* *pp* *molto espressivo*

8 8 8

[illegible]

The image displays a musical score for 'The Swan' from 'The Nutcracker'. It features two systems of staves. The first system, labeled 'I' on the left, consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The second system, labeled 'II' on the left, also consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The music is written in B-flat major (two flats) and 3/4 time. The first system contains measures 178 through 181. The second system contains measures 182 through 185. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests. There are also some red markings and a blue dot on the first system's bass staff.

II

Andante ♩ = 80

Piano I (Solo)

Piano II (Orchestra)

mf *Str.*

I

II

cantabile 4 5-4 5 4 3 5

p 3 *sempre legato* 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Lea Lea Lea Lea Lea simile

II

The musical score is divided into five systems. The first system shows Piano I (Solo) and Piano II (Orchestra) staves. Piano I has a whole rest, while Piano II plays a melody with a forte dynamic (mf) and a staccato (Str.) instruction. The second system continues the Piano II melody. The third system introduces a new melody for Piano I, marked piano (p) and cantabile, with fingerings 4, 5, 4, 5, 4, 3, 5. The fourth system continues the Piano I melody with triplets and the instruction 'sempre legato'. The fifth system continues the Piano I melody with the instruction 'Lea simile'.

I
 II

// **11**

I
 II

//

I
 II

12

8^{va}

25

mf *lamentoso*

Rea. * *Rea.* * *Rea.*

30

ppp

SOLO

34 *Piu Mosso*

mf *poco accelerando*

4 2 1 2 3 1 3 1 3 1

4

34

Cantabile ♩ = 92

I

47 *8va*

II

47 **Cantabile** ♩ = 92

Rea *

Rea *

Rea *

Rea *

Rea *

Rea *

// *8va*

I

52

II

52

Rea *

Rea *

Rea *

Rea *

Rea *

// *8va*

I

56

II

56

Rea *

Rea *

Rea *

Rea *

Rea *

60

I

II

13

8^{va}

Str. *f*

63

I

II

8^{va}

ff

Tutti

ff

Tpt.

marcato

f

67

I

II

f

f

f

ff

I

71 *8va* *6* *6* *8va* *8va* *8va*

8va simile

II

71 *8va* *3* *3*

//

I

75 *f* *poco rall.* *presto* *f* *8va pp* *8va* *6/4*

8va

II

75 *poco rall.* *ff* *(Cadenza breve)* *6/4*

//

I

79 *f* *rall.* *f* *rall.* *f* *[non dim.]* *6/4*

8va *

II

79 *6/4* *6/4* *6/4* *6/4* *6/4*

83 **Recitativo** 14 **Animato** ♩ = 120

I

II

83

ppp

f *Tpt.*

87

p pizz. *cresc. ...* *f Tpt.* *p pizz.*

93

f arco *crescendo molto*

96 **15** 8^{va}

mf *lamentoso*

Meno mosso ♩ = 76

p *Str.*

96 *rit.* 8^{va}

100 8^{va} *rit.*

100 *Lento* *Tempo I* *mf*

Lento *Tempo I* *pp* *Woodw.* *mf* *legato* *Tutti*

104

16

108

I

II

112

17

mf *lamentoso*

p

Woodw.

Str.

116

II

III

(Passacaglia)

Allegro Molto ♩ = 120

Piano I
(Solo)

Piano II
(Orchestra)

f
Brass

//

VAR. I

I

II

ff
Tutti

//

I

II

19**VAR. II**

17 *f* *8va* 5 2 1 3 4 1 4 5 2 1 4 *8va*

I *Lea* *Lea* *Lea* * *Picc.* *Lea* *Lea* *Lea* *

II *Ob.* *p* *sfz* *sfz*

//

21 *8va* *8va*

I *Lea simile*

II *sfz* *sfz*

//

VAR. III

25 *ff martellato* *8va*

I *Lea* *Lea* *Lea* *Lea*

II *f pizz.*

8va

I

29

II

29

Leg.

Leg.

Leg.

Leg.

*

// **20** VAR. IV

I

33

II

33

Woodw.

p legato

Leg.

*

//

I

36

II

36

Leg.

*

Leg.

39

I

II

5

5

39

Sea.

// VAR. V

41

I

II

marcato

[senza ped.]

ff Str., cl.

pp Tpt. (muted)

ff

pp

//

45

I

II

ff

pp

ff

pp

21 VAR. VI

I

II

49

p Str.

cresc. . .

8^{va}

//

I

II

53

dim. . .

8^{va}

//

VAR. VII

I

II

57

p

cresc. . .

61

I

61

II

pp

VAR. IX

73 *f* *8va* *8va*

mf Tutti

Reo. *

Reo. *

//

77 *8va* *8va*

Reo. *

Reo. *

81 **VAR. X Agitato** $\text{♩} = 52$

mf

p pizz.

85

I

II

// VAR. XI

89

I

II

p

p Woodw.

//

93

I

II

VAR. XII Meno mosso ♩ = 144

I

II

f *Tutti*

//

VAR. XIII Maestoso ♩ = 126

I

II

ff

p

Rea

Rea

Rea

Rea

Rea

//

I

II

Rea

Rea

Rea

Rea

Rea

VAR. XIV

24

Allegretto ♩ = 120

I *poco rall.*
 II *poco rall.*
 * *Cl.*
 * *pp*
 * *Vlc. solo*

//

VAR. XV

I *p*
 II *pp*
 * *Bsn.*

//

I *122*
 II *122*

VAR. XVI

126 *dim. ...*

p *legato*

Rea. Rea. Rea.

p *Str.*

//

130

*Rea. * Rea. Rea. Rea. Rea. * Rea. Rea. Rea.*

130

*Rea. * Rea. Rea. Rea. Rea. * Rea. Rea. Rea.*

//

VAR. XVII

25 Allegro ♩ = 138

134

f

*Rea. * Rea. Rea. Rea. Rea. * Rea. Rea. Rea.*

134

marcato

138

I

II

//

8^{va}-----

VAR. XVIII

142

I

II

cresc. ...

ff Tutti

//

147

I

II

rit.

I

II

8va|

8va

*

// VAR. XIX

24 Vivace = 160

I

II

162

f Woodw.

3

3

//

I

II

166

>

VAR. XX *Giocoso* ♩. = 100

I

ff

dim. . .

Reo. *

II

mf Str.

dim. . .

//

I

p

Reo. *

II

pp

molto rit.

Timp.

VAR. XXI

//

27 *Meno mosso* ♩. = 80

I

rit.

f

cresc. . .

II

rit.

Brass

ff

VAR. XXII 8^{va}

Moderato

Musical Score for 'Moderato' (E-flat major, 3/4 time)

Tempo: Moderato

Dynamics: *ff* (fortissimo)

Section: 180 measures (marked with a red dashed line and repeat sign)

Instrumentation: String Quartet (I, II, III, IV) and Soprano (Soprano)

Key Signature: E-flat major (three flats: B-flat, E-flat, A-flat)

Time Signature: 3/4

Lyrics: Rea, Rea

Performance Notes: The score includes triplets, a 'Tutti' section, and a vocal line with lyrics 'Rea' and 'Rea'.

Red. simile

Soprano

8^{va} -----

//

II

I

II

APPENDIX B

CATALOG OF CARLOS ENRIQUE VARGAS' ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS¹

TITLE	YEAR OF COMPOSITION
<u>Works for Piano</u>	
<i>Ensayos Juveniles, Op. 1</i>	1930-7
<i>Pequeña Marcha</i>	
<i>Primer Vals</i>	
<i>Melodía</i>	
<i>Los Duendes</i>	
<i>Scherzino</i>	
<i>A la Mazurca</i>	
<i>Barcarola</i>	
<i>Gavota</i>	
<i>Himno</i>	
<i>Pequeña Fantasía</i>	
<i>Preludio</i>	
<i>Reverie</i>	
<i>Minueto en Re, Op. 2 (four hands)</i>	1936
<i>Sarabanda a la Bach, Op.3</i>	1936
<i>Sonatina</i>	
<i>Fantasía (on a theme by Jose Joaquín Vargas)</i>	

¹ This compilation has been reproduced from Anabel Campos *Carlos Enrique Vargas: Vida y Música* (San José: Editorial UNED, 2003), 137-40. The source also contains a catalog of Vargas' arrangements of works by other composers.

Works for Piano (continued)

<i>Romanza, Op. 4</i>	1937
<i>Humorada</i>	1940
<i>Polonesa</i>	1939
<i>Allegro Enérgico, Op. 6</i>	1940
<i>Vals Capricho, Op. 7</i>	1939
<i>Variaciones, Op. 9</i>	1941
<i>La Caravana, Op. 11</i>	1941
<i>Marcha Grotesca</i>	
<i>Preludio</i>	1942
<i>Scherzo</i>	1942
Cadenza for Beethoven's Concerto Op. 37	1942
<i>Dos Piezas Fáciles (four hands) Op. 14</i>	1944
<i>El Trompetero Místico</i>	1944
<i>Gracielina</i>	1954
Second Cadenza for Beethoven's Concerto Op. 37	1985

Works for Organ

<i>Preludio "La Anunciación"</i>	1962
<i>Marcha de los Padrinos</i>	1971

Works for Harpsichord

Sonatina 1962

Works for Saxophone

Siete perfiles “El gato murió de histeria” 1962

Works for Orchestra

Elegía a la Memoria de Sergei Rachmaninov 1943

Concierto para Piano y Orquesta, Op. 13 1944

Sinfonía, Op. 17 1945

Antígona (for chorus and orchestra) 1961

Marcha Fúnebre de Antígona

Suite, from Antígona

Vocal Music

SACRED

O Salutaris Hostia, Op. 5 (for female voices and piano) 1940

Sanctus Deus 1940

Misa No.1 en Re (for unison choir and organ) 1940

Memorare, Op. 10 1941

Ave Maria (two female voices and organ) 1954

Vocal Music (continued)

EDUCATIONAL

<i>Himno al Cincuentenario C. C. S. S.</i>	1938
<i>Himno Asociación Adoradores Casa Margarita</i>	1944
<i>Canto de los Estudiantes</i>	1962
<i>Escuela Nueva</i>	1964
<i>Flores Centroamericanas</i>	1969
<i>Himno al Lincoln School</i>	1972

MISCELLANEOUS

<i>Solfeo a Tres Voces Iguales, Op. 3</i>	1937
<i>La Balada del Día, Op. 15</i> (soprano and piano)	1941
<i>Ansias, Op. 10</i>	1942
<i>Canto a la Alegría, “Trompetero Místico”</i>	1944
<i>La Anunciación</i> (soloists and two choirs)	1962

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF CONSENT

San José, October 15, 2003

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Mr. Manuel Matarrita is authorized to use all of the scores and text materials pertaining to the Concerto for Piano and Orchestra written by my father Carlos E. Vargas in 1944, in San José, Costa Rica, for the purposes of preparing his doctoral thesis or public execution of same.

As the only depository of all the music, scores, letters and library materials that used to belong to my father, I know that Mr. Matarrita will give appropriate treatment to said documents.

I remain, truly yours,

Roberto Vargas
Roberto E. Vargas
San José, Costa Rica

VITA

Manuel Matarrita was born in San José, Costa Rica. In 1989, upon graduation from high school, he entered the *Escuela de Artes Musicales de la Universidad de Costa Rica*, where he studied from 1989 to 1993. His major professors were Higinio Fernández and María Clara Cullell. He earned the degrees of Bachelor of Music and *Licenciado*, both in piano performance, from that institution in 1992 and 1994, respectively.

Subsequently, he attended the University of New Orleans, Louisiana, as a graduate student in the studio of Professor Mary Ann Bulla, and completed the Master of Music degree in 2001. The same year, he began his doctoral studies in piano performance at Louisiana State University, studying with Barineau Professor Constance Knox Carroll.

Manuel Matarrita will receive the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts at the LSU' s summer commencement, August, 2004.