

## **WHY IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THE LATIN AMERICAN ART SONG REPERTOIRE**

Theodoro Valcárcel Art Songs in Indigenous and Spanish Languages

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis presents an overview of Latin American Art Songs, emphasizing their cultural significance, musical richness, and the diverse influences from at least three continents that have contributed to their birth. It explores their historical roots, struggles for Latin American identity, and the syncretism of indigenous, European, and African traditions, cultures. A key focus is the role of indigenous languages, particularly Quechua, in shaping some of its repertoire, with an emphasis on the works of Theodoro Valcárcel, a Peruvian Aymara composer.

Additionally, this thesis examines the ways in which Latin American Art Songs function as a form of cultural resistance against colonial narratives, advocating for the revalorization and recognition of these traditions in the academic and classical music worlds. It argues for the decolonization of classical music, challenging dominant Eurocentric frameworks and emphasizing the role of music in the ongoing struggle for human rights and cultural equity.

Ultimately, this work seeks to contribute to a broader understanding of Latin American Art Songs as a tool for historical awareness, anti-colonial expression, and cultural reawakening. Through this lens, it highlights the power of music in fostering justice, reclaiming heritage, and resisting systemic oppression.

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## GLOSSARY

**Syncretism** – The blending of different cultural or religious traditions, resulting in a new expression.

**Transculturation** – The process by which one culture adopts elements from another, transforming in the process.

**Quechua** – An indigenous language from the Andes, spoken in Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador Argentina and Chile.

**Aymara** – An indigenous language spoken in parts of Bolivia, Peru, and Chile.

**Cultural Decolonization** – The process of reclaiming and valuing native cultural expressions in the face of colonial influence.

**Conundrum** – Refers to a puzzle, problem, or situation that is difficult to solve or understand. It can also be used more informally to describe something that is confusing or perplexing.

**Wiphala** – It is the most well-known emblem of the Indigenous peoples of Abya Yala (the Americas). "It is a symbol, not a flag, and it represents Pachamama, the cosmos, animals, plants, stones, *runa* (humans), and life in harmony," clarify Kantuta Killa Mayu (*Dr. Mariel N. Camillo*) and Wari Rimachi Mayu (*Tp. Javier R. Ríos*), members of the Council of Indigenous Amautas of Tawantinsuyu in Argentina.<sup>1</sup>

To understand its meaning, they continue, we must first refer to the Unancha, which is the symbol that displays the colors of the rainbow in horizontal lines.

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<sup>1</sup> Argentina.Gob.Ar. Wiphala: Símbolo de la vida en armonía

In the unfolding of the Andean-Amazonian cosmovision, a sacred event takes place: the crossing of two rainbows—the male rainbow and the female rainbow, the duality that is the pillar of our worldview, they explain. This duality, the complementarity of opposites, in their crossing, leads to evolution, growth, fertility, and wisdom. From this intersection of k'uchi (rainbows), the Wiphala emerges.<sup>1</sup>

**Polysemic** Capable of having several possible meanings

**Mestisaje** Refers to the mixing of different ethnic, cultural, or “racial” groups, particularly in Latin America, where it involves the blending of indigenous, European (mainly Spanish), and African cultures. It has been seen as a symbol of Latin American identity due to the region's ethnic diversity. However, it is also controversial because it has sometimes been used to marginalize indigenous peoples or promote a homogenized “mestizo” identity, overlooking the distinctiveness of smaller or marginalized groups. Mestizaje also refers to cultural hybridization, where different cultural elements combine to create new expressions, customs, and values.

**Syncretism** Refers to the blending or combination of different beliefs, cultures, or practices, especially when it comes to religion, philosophy, or cultural traditions. It occurs when elements from various sources merge to form a new, often hybrid, system or worldview.

In the context of religion, for example, syncretism might involve the merging of indigenous beliefs with those of colonizing forces, such as the fusion of Catholicism with indigenous spiritual practices in Latin America. It can also refer to the blending of musical, artistic, or culinary traditions from different cultural backgrounds. Syncretism highlights the ways in which cultures evolve and adapt when they come into contact with one another, sometimes creating entirely new practices or ways of thinking.

**Fusion** Refers to the process of combining two or more distinct elements to form a unified whole. It can be applied in various contexts, like Cultural Fusion, Musical

Fusion, Scientific Fusion. In general, fusion signifies the bringing together of different parts to create something new and integrated.

**Transculturation** Refers to the process by which different cultures come into contact and influence each other, resulting in the blending, adaptation, or exchange of cultural elements. This term is often used to describe the transformation that occurs when one culture is exposed to another, especially in contexts of colonization, migration, or cultural exchange. Unlike assimilation, where one culture absorbs another, transculturation emphasizes mutual exchange and the creation of new cultural forms.

**Creolization** Refers to the process by which two or more distinct cultures or languages blend to create new, unique cultural forms or languages. This term is often used in the context of colonization, where African, European, and Indigenous cultures mixed, especially in the Americas. It can refer to the creation of new languages, known as Creole languages, as well as the development of new cultural practices, identities, or social structures that emerge from this blending. Creolization highlights the hybrid nature of culture that results from forced or voluntary interactions between different cultural groups.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

What I aim to achieve with this thesis is to share, promote, discover, and bring awareness to the world of Latin American art songs. At the same time, this will be a journey of knowledge and study, an endeavor in research, where curiosity and the desire to deeply understand this region, its cultural, musical, and historical richness, are fostered.

I also want to raise awareness about the existing cultural imperialism and how propaganda, through industrial cultural media, has cemented prejudices and false ideas about this region, its cultures, and its music. This has been done from a racist, imperialist, and ignorant Western perspective, which is vastly disconnected from reality.

Briefly, I am interested in showing how sound and rhythms impact our psyche. I will share some insights and studies that have been rewarding for me, as I was able to find documented research that supports what I had intuitively believed about the effects of sounds and rhythms.

Furthermore, I will analyze how cultural imperialism influences the perception of the Global South and how it predisposes racism in Western societies. It is a mechanism that maintains the position of "white supremacy" as an internalized "dogma," "doctrine" from which many nations struggle to free themselves. This is particularly evident in countries that have taken for granted that their music is the standard of "cultured" Western music, even when other perspectives persist within their own regions.

NB: For a moment, I thought progress had been made on this issue, but then I heard some of the soundtracks at the beginning of *Paddington in Peru*, and it was confirmation that no progress has been made at all in the perception of Latin America, especially in terms of knowledge about its multiculturalism and music.

The importance of Latin American music goes beyond its musical and cultural richness. If we want to put it this way, it transcends into an anthropological and human aspect. Its study helps break the prejudices imposed by cultural imperialism and allows for the re-education of minds in societies that have suffered from colonial alienation for centuries. Colonizing nations have shaped history, philosophy, science, and literature with narratives that justified colonization and the dehumanization of the cultures and civilizations subjugating their peoples. All of this has always had an economic backdrop, which continues barbarically to this day, preventing Latin American nations from living in peace and having full sovereignty over their lands and destinies.

If there is no knowledge or respect for Latin America within the mass cultural industry, we are lost as a global society. We are talking about a region that has the lungs of the world “The Amazon rainforest”<sup>2</sup>. A region which ranks among the top 10 in global biodiversity, with three Latin American countries among them<sup>3</sup>. This alone highlights a fundamental failure in Western perception. The imperialist cultural industry, from its limited and colonizing perspective, imposes disdain and the perception of inferiority toward Latin American peoples. The only way to change this artificially imposed view is through knowledge, and in this case, through the study of art songs as a prelude.

Introducing Latin American art songs allows us to enter a world of literature, beauty, and poetry, where the thought and idiosyncrasies of its peoples are reflected. It gives us the opportunity to immerse ourselves in their languages, expressions, cultures, and music. The transculturation that this region has undergone for centuries could be considered postmodern long before the West coined the term. The musical fusion of diverse cultures and continents has given rise to a mosaic of rhythms and genres, a rainbow comparable to the **wiphala**, in which the roots of different traditions have created musical styles that we continue to enjoy today. Understanding the origins of these rhythms and how they

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<sup>2</sup> Vanesa López Romero: Latin America continues to be one of the most biodiverse regions in the world (Latin American Post).

<sup>3</sup> Banco de desarrollo de América Latina y el Caribe: La Amazonía: el pulmón del mundo enfrenta una deforestación acelerada CAF

emerged allows us to see how, through music, peoples have resisted and continue to resist the transnational imperialist system.

In today's world, where political populism is resurfacing, it is more urgent than ever to understand and appreciate Latin American musical heritage. Through the re-education and study of its art songs, we can grasp how various cultures, peoples, and continents have merged, becoming a vanguard example that we must study if we aim to build a society free from racism and prejudices.

It is essential to recognize this cultural richness and learn from the historical journey toward a truly pluricultural society. This is not to say that problems do not exist over there, of course they do. Both imperialist interventionism and the colonial legacy have left deep scars. That is precisely why we must re-educate and decolonize ourselves, decolonizing education, the cultural industry, and culture itself, so that one day, we may become a global human family and a truly evolved society.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF LATIN AMERICAN ART SONGS

Latin American Art Songs are closely tied to the construction of identity, considering the historical context, the repercussions of colonialism, and the traumatic events and historical facts that occurred in the region due to the actions of the colonizers, including genocides, foreign intervention, and imperialism. From the transatlantic slave trade to the massacres carried out by the colonizers sent by the Castilian crown, and even before that, starting with Columbus's invasion.

Art song, also known as Lied or chamber music, emerged in Germanic countries during the 18th and 19th centuries. It is a genre for solo voice with piano or guitar accompaniment, characterized by brevity, an emphasis on poetic text, and an intimate performance context. The genre renounces the virtuosic bel canto style, with melodies shifting from declamatory to cantabile to emphasize the meaning of the text. The accompaniment in art song is not merely a mirror of the vocal line; it works as a duo with the voice to highlight the poetry's meaning.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.1 Latin American Art Song: Challenges in the Academic World

The aesthetic model of *Lied* extended globally, influencing composers from Europe and the Americas to set the texts of local poets to music, which occurred in Latin America during the 19th century. Classical music curricula in Latin American conservatories focus on opera, oratorio, and *Lied*, with a strong emphasis on European works, particularly from Italy, Germany, and France. Latin American composers, such as Alberto Ginastera, Carlos Guastavino, Heitor Villa-Lobos, and Manuel M. Ponce, are some of the few recognized in classical education.

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<sup>4</sup> Patricia Caicedo, *The Latin American Art Song – Sounds of the Imagined Nations* 1

The curriculum's Eurocentric focus limits exposure to Latin American art song. However, the situation differs across regions; for instance, in Italy, the focus is mainly on opera, with some Italian and Spanish from Spain *Lieds*. In contrast, Finland takes a broader approach, making *Lied* a key part of the curriculum, including works in Scandinavian languages, in French, Russian, in Spanish from Spain, in English from UK and U.S.A.

Political and social factors have contributed to the lack of recognition of Latin American art song repertoire. These works were often not published, making them difficult for performers to access and promote. This creates a cycle where these compositions remain largely unknown, limiting their performance and integration into music education.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Patricia Caicedo, *The Latin American Art Song – Sounds of the Imagined Nations* 2,3.

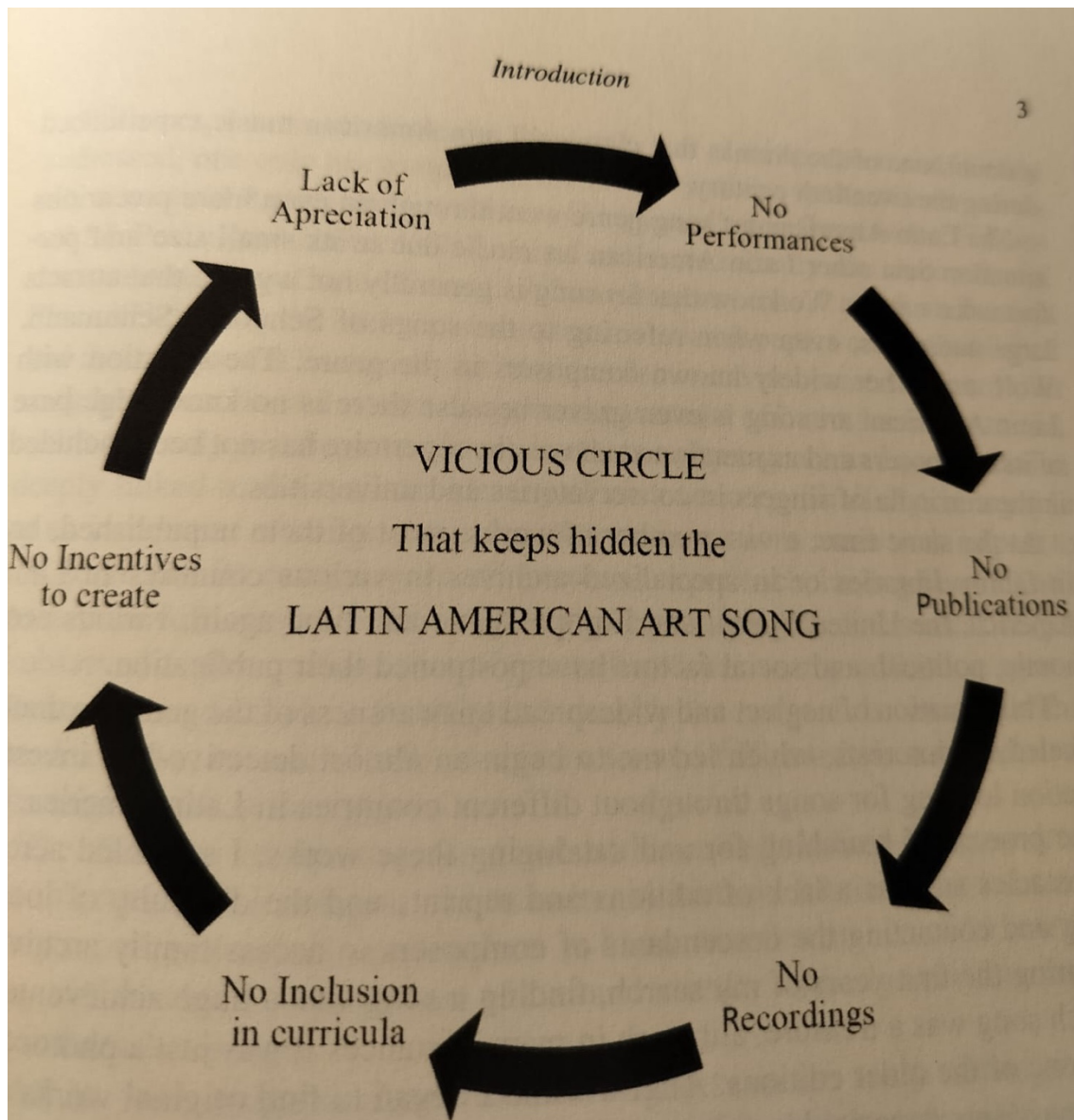


FIGURE 1 “Vicious circle that perpetuates the lack of promotion and knowledge of the Latina American art song.”<sup>5</sup>

I have made efforts to promote Latin American art songs, particularly works by Theodoro Valcárcel, and others like Jaime León, Rosa Mercedes Ayarza de Morales among others, through concerts in concert halls and churches in Finland (Helsinki, Turku and Oulu). However, Latin American classical music, including art songs, is not widely known in Latin America or globally, with many believing it lacks the quality of European music. Additionally, anthropological studies have focused more on popular and folk music rather than Latin American classical music.

The development of Latin American classical music has been hindered by a poorly developed music publishing industry, limiting the genre's recognition. However, notable exceptions exist, such as Ricordi Americana, which helped preserve and promote Latin American art song through the publication of works by composers like Pasqual Guarino, Arturo López, and many others in the early 20th century.<sup>6</sup>

Despite some publications, many works did not receive international distribution, and limited copies were printed, leading to minimal social impact. Additionally, many works remain inaccessible due to restrictive publishing contracts and a lack of reprints. This situation has been one of the main struggles of Latin American classical music.<sup>6</sup>

Art song, a genre that generally attracts small audiences, has been even more neglected in Latin America due to the lack of awareness about its composers. Much of the repertoire remains unpublished or hidden in family libraries and specialized archives. Political, economic, and social factors have delayed the publication of many works.<sup>6</sup>

## **2.2 Historical Context and Origins - The Sound of the Imagined Nations**

*It is a magnificent idea to try to form a single nation from the entire New World with a single link uniting its parts within and with everything else... But this union will not come through divine miracles, but through sensible and well-driven efforts.*

*Simón Bolívar, Letter from Jamaica 1815<sup>6</sup>*

Between 1810 and 1830, many American colonies gained independence, sparking the search for national identity, which permeated all levels of culture and society. Musical nationalism emerged as a way to define music outside the established European centers of power, particularly from the "periphery." This form of nationalism, initially called romantic nationalism, aimed to create a unified state based on shared characteristics like language, ethnicity, religion, and

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<sup>6</sup> Patricia Caicedo, *The Latin American Art Song – Sounds of the Imagined Nations* 3,4,9

customs. It was inspired by thinkers like Jean Jacques Rousseau and Johann Gottfried von Herder, who argued that a community's culture and customs were shaped by the geographical space they occupied.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to point out that, although these great thinkers and philosophers existed, their ideas were already present in Abya Yala, the region now known as the Americas, where many civilizations lived in community, and with respect of nature, if that is not a great indication of civilization, in contrast with our actual times. The Inka Empire 2 500 000 km<sup>2</sup> composed by extense part territories from actual Peru, Chile, Colombia, Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, "*By Universal agreement among its people made the conservation and increase of the Earth resources a fundamental national policy, never before never sense has a nation done what the Inka state did*"<sup>7</sup>, there was a guaranteed supply of food for all inhabitants, no one was suffering hunger. "*There was civilization, there was art, there was culture, there were deeds of strength and resistance and dignity.*"<sup>8</sup>

Language became central to the nationalist project, serving as a tool to represent reality and connect political, cultural, and linguistic realities. Folklore, oral traditions, and old legends were increasingly valued as authentic cultural expressions. Music played a significant role in the nationalist discourse, particularly in the creation of *Lied*, a type of song with piano or guitar accompaniment that emphasized the poetic text. The melody and accompaniment in *Lied* were not simply duplications of the vocal line, but worked together to highlight the meaning of the words, joining music and poetry in a powerful way.<sup>9</sup>

### **2.3 Nationalism**

In 1965, Hans Kohn defined nationalism as a strong attachment to one's place of origin, local traditions, and territorial authorities, while Ernest Gellner emphasized its political component, linking nationalism to shared culture within political, economic, and educational systems. Thomas Turino reserved "nationalism" for

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<sup>7</sup> Sheldon Peters Wolfchild: Doctrine of Discovery: Unmasking the Domination Code

<sup>8</sup> Sheldon Peters Wolfchild: Doctrine of Discovery: Unmasking the Domination Code

<sup>9</sup> Patricia Caicedo, *The Latin American Art Song – Sounds of the Imagined Nations* 10,11,12

political movements focused on unifying groups. Modern nationalism aims to create a unified entity, with the nation-state as the goal, connecting cultural, linguistic, and political realities. Hobsbawm and Anderson suggest nations are often constructed or "imagined" by elites, challenging the idea of objective national characteristics like language or shared history.<sup>9</sup>

Musical nationalism emerged as a cultural tool to build national identity, with composers using elements like folk music to express national identity and unite people. The New Harvard Dictionary defines musical nationalism as incorporating folk materials or rhythms that suggest a national origin. While this idea was prominent in 19th and early 20th-century music from peripheral nations (those outside the central European power), this framework often positioned European countries, particularly German-speaking ones, as the center of the musical world.<sup>9</sup>

The use of folk elements in music was often seen as a strategy to break free from the dominance of international styles, especially those from Germany. However, this view, shaped by Eurocentric musicology, neglects the deeper sociocultural motivations behind the use of national elements in music. Music is inseparable from its social context, and composers, influenced by their environment, can express national identity, even without using identifiable folk motifs.<sup>9</sup>

Gerard Béhague suggests that equating musical nationalism strictly with national style has hindered a full understanding of the phenomenon. In the 20th century, composers began to imbue their works with national character, even if they did not include folk elements. The perception of national identity, shaped by cultural values, plays a central role in defining nationalist music. Identity, both collective and cultural, is complex, involving both objective and subjective elements. Nationalism in music has thus become more subjective, transitioning from strict adherence to folk elements to broader, more abstract expressions of national identity.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Patricia Caicedo, *The Latin American Art Song – Sounds of the Imagined Nations* 12,14

## 2.4 Identity

Identity is a process of self-discovery and construction, influenced by both personal and social perceptions. It involves the negotiation between how we see ourselves and how others see us. According to Eric Erickson, individuals go through a period of exploration to identify with certain groups and values, which ultimately gives meaning and direction to their lives. Personal and social identities are interconnected and constantly evolve as individuals and groups interact with each other and their changing environments.<sup>10</sup>

For Latin America, the search for identity has been complicated and painful due to its diversity, with multiple viewpoints and ethnic, cultural, and social factors that prevent a single, unified identity from forming. Latin America's richness and complexity arise from this diversity, but it also creates challenges in discovering a cohesive national identity. The region's ethnic and cultural heterogeneity, syncretism, and multiple cultural languages make it unique and contradictory, challenging traditional models of nationalism. Latin America's identity is therefore more complex and polysemic, defying easy categorization and conventional ideas of nationalism.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. CULTURAL TRANSCULTURATION

Latin America is often considered an "anomaly" in the history of nationalism due to its lack of traditional linguistic and ethnic distinctions that are common in Europe and Asia. This complexity makes it difficult to apply European models of nationalism. The concept of hybridization, coined by Néstor García Canclini, is useful to describe Latin American identity, which blends various influences, such as the local and the foreign, the national and the global, as well as the traditional and the modern. Hybridization also involves conflicts of inclusion and exclusion due to ongoing power struggles. Garcia Canclini links this idea to various concepts like contradiction, *mestizaje*, syncretism, fusion, transculturation, and creolization, all of which help explain the multifaceted and diverse nature of Latin American identity.<sup>11</sup>

#### 3.1 Influence of Four Continents

In Latin America the influence of four continents has happened by one of the first intercultural relations that happened in the region with the Hispanics from Kingdom from Castile in the case of Peru and other Latin American Countries except Brazil were the invaders came from the Kingdom of Portugal. Before all Columbus in 1492 arrived in the Region and there was made the first contact with the indigenous peoples, while he thought that he was in India, but he was just lost. This first intercultural relations were negative as the invaders better to describe as criminals, tried to subordinate and even erase with genocides the other cultures under the Doctrine of Discovery.

“Since the Conquest and Colonization in the 16th century, there is also the great contrast between each of these peoples and the culture and identity of those who arrived from Spain to stay, dominate, and transform (and even mix with) the local population. This is undoubtedly the main cultural and identity contrast that has existed in the country since then: on one side, those who, due to their physical

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<sup>11</sup> Patricia Caicedo, *The Latin American Art Song – Sounds of the Imagined Nations* 14,15

origin and other cultural habits, are identified as or identify themselves as Creoles or descendants of those Spaniards; and on the other side, the indigenous peoples whom they began to call 'Indians' without making much distinction between their various identities as peoples.”<sup>12</sup>

“Which, when seen and understood in the deformity of the injustice that is done to those innocent people, destroying and tearing them apart without cause or just reason for it, but only for the greed and ambition of those who commit such nefarious acts.”<sup>13</sup>

Here Bartolomé de las Casa documented the atrocities, crimes against humanity, Genocides inflicted by the criminal invaders-colonizers on the indigenous people through all American continent (Abya Yala).

Topic of actuality, as the fight of indigenous peoples for their land is still happening were transnationals and the Westerns powers continuing to deploy them from their natural resources with not income neither giving to them, pure exploitation and interventionism in their political spheres.

It is too extensive to explain the four Continents influences of each country in Latin America, so I will focus on Perú and on the different fluxes of the cultures that are part of its cultural sincretism:

### **Andean matrix**

To summarize we will refer to the Inka Culture and The Tawantinsuyo that developed between the XIII and XV centuries A.D. Otherwise we should start from the first settlements of 12 000 years ago, as there were other pre-Inka cultures and civilizations as Caral almost 5000 years ago, Mochica I and VII century, Nazca 100 BC – 700 AD, Paracas arising around the year 700 BC, just to mention some.

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<sup>12</sup> Xavier Albó y J. Fernando Galindo, Interculturalidad en el Desarrollo Rural Sostenible. El caso de Bolivia. Pistas conceptuales y metodológicas 9

<sup>13</sup> Bartolomé de las Casas, Brevisima relación de la destrucción de las Indias 11

We find the great architectural constructions as Machu Picchu, Coricancha Temple or Temple of the Sun.

We can observe elements of the Andean cultures in textiles, and in terracing. This terracing technology in agriculture allowed the development of intensive farming, some of the products include chili, corn, potatoes, beans, cassava. The Potato (papa) important products that save Europe when wars, scarcity and famine. Potatoes were domesticated in Perú, and in Peru we have over 2000 varieties of potatoes.<sup>14</sup>

### **Western European cultural matrix (invasion and colonization)**

- In 1526 the “Spanish” invasion led by Francisco Pizarro took place.
- On November 16, 1532, the Inka Atahualpa met the invaders in Cajamarca, marking the beginning of the invasion and destruction of the Tawantinsuyo (Name in Quechua language for what is known as Inka Empire).
- The invaders imposed their culture, with the Spanish language and Catholic religion being their main pillars.<sup>14</sup>
- In the XVI century also arrived from Britain Pirates and privateers.<sup>15</sup>
- In the XIII arrived Catholic Irish officials in the service of Spain.<sup>15</sup>
- Having Ambrosio O’Higgins who became governor of Chile and viceroy of Peru.<sup>15</sup>
- Veterans of the British wars in search of opportunities in Latin America while Europe was in peace. Three of them participate to the Independence of Peru, one of them being part of the heroes of the Independence.<sup>1415</sup>

### **African Cultural Matrix**

The African culture has left a legacy to Peru today: Afro-Peruvian dance, music, the cajón, an afro-Peruvian percussion instrument. We have decimas, poetry, such as that of Nicomédes Santa Cruz, and food with African techniques. The

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<sup>14</sup> Coor. Dra. Sanchez Garcia, Confer: Dr.Enrique Rivera Vela Seminario de Diversidad Cultural I Conferencia Perú: un país pluricultural e ¿intercultural? In the Puic UNAM (Programa Universtario de Estudios de la Diversidad; Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico)

<sup>15</sup> Sucedió en el Perú (TVPerú): Inmigración británica

first African to arrive in Perú was brought by the Spaniards in 1527. It is estimated that a total of 15 million of Africans were brought to Latin America, and 15 000 of them would have arrived in Perú. Currently, 3% of the afro-Peruvian population is located, along the Peruvian coast, mainly in the areas of Callao, the province of Cañete, Chincha, Ica and Nazca, as well as in the Northern Region of Peru.<sup>14</sup>

### **European Immigration in the XIX century**

We are now years after Perú independence, Europeans immigrants start to arrive, mainly merchants, industrialist, professionals, musician, artisans, marines and so on, when the nation-state was beginning to develop and be built, the 1876 census counted a total of 18,078 Europeans, including Italians, English, French, Spaniards, Germans and others.

Currently it is estimated that there are 860 000 Peruvians of Italian descent. 160,000 of German descent. Of the Austro-German immigrants who settled in the Pozuzo (a district in the Oxapampa Province), it is estimated that their descendant's number around 10,000 people.<sup>14</sup>

### **Arab origin population**

It is estimated that the approximate number of Arabs who entered Perú since the mid XIX century would be around 10 000 people.

Approximately 5% of the Peruvian Population has some Arab ancestry, even though most of them are ethnically and culturally mestizo, since many of the Arabs changed their last names to Spanish, because at that time, the entry of non-Christians migrants were prohibited.<sup>14</sup>

### **Chinese Immigration**

Already during the viceroyalty era in the census 1613 "Indian" register of the Marquis of Montes Claros, the presence of Asian immigrants is clearly defined, who could have been Japanese, Sengleyes\* from the Philippines or Chinese.

In 1849, President Ramón Castilla enacted a Law known as the Chinese Law. This Law allowed the entry of Chinese people into Perú. At that time, after

granting freedom to slaves, there were no workers to carry out agricultural work on the estates.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, the doors were opened for entrepreneurs to bring Chinese migrants under a 7-year contract. The arrangements were that they would be brought to work in the estates for 7 years in exchange for food, housing and a small salary. After the 7 years they were free, they could either stay in the estate or leave. Most opted to leave the estate and settle on the outskirts of the city, mainly in Lima and other coastal cities.<sup>14</sup>

Approximately 100,000 Chinese people arrived in Peru, 95% of them from Canton region, and the rest from Macao and Hong Kong. They were hired as workers for sugar and cotton plantations, guano harvesting, and railroad construction. A small group settle in the Amazon region.

In 1930, Chinese migration was banned. Currently it is estimated that there are 250,000 people that maintain a strong ethnic origin, and about 2% of the Peruvian population has some Chinese ancestry.<sup>14</sup>

### **Japanese Immigration (after Chinese immigration)<sup>14</sup>**

In April 1899 the first 790 immigrants arrived at the Port of Callao. Most of them were agricultural workers destined for the large sugar plantation located on the Peruvian coast, similar to the Chinese, who were essentially brought to work in agricultural labor.

- In 2024 was the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Japanese to Perú, and we see that, they have also mainly influenced the food.
- By 1923, 102 more immigrants had arrived. From that year onward, they began entering the country as free immigrants.
- In 1965 the government granted or donated land. In 1967, the Peruvian Japanese Cultural Center was inaugurated in the city of Lima. Its presence

is very interesting and important, because they have for example a museum dedicated to immigration.

- In the 1980s, emigration began, during a very difficult period in Peru due to the economic crisis. The emigration of Peruvian Nikkeis (people of Japanese descent living outside Japan) to Japan began. It is estimated that of the nearly 100,000 members of the Peruvian Japanese community, 40,000 Nikkeis went to work in Japan.

### **Venezuelan immigration**

In the recent years, we have also experience an other wave of immigrations, as Venezuelan. And while it is true it that it is not a culture completely different from the Peruvian culture, it also has its own particular elements. The presence of Venezuelan migrants on the streets of Peru for the past 5,6, 7 years (data of 2018) with their typical jackets in the colors of the flag, selling arepas, bombas, etc, is evident.<sup>14</sup>

As we can see, Peru and, more broadly, Latin America is a deeply pluricultural region. This area has experienced a rich process of transculturation over centuries, which has led to the flourishing of many idiosyncrasies and cultures. From my point of view, it stands as an example to follow in terms of the positive aspects of cultural blending. As I mentioned earlier, it is not a region without flaws, but it has nevertheless achieved a transversal pluriculturalism something that still needs to be fully recognized in Peru, and which, for instance, has been more clearly acknowledged in Bolivia.<sup>14</sup>

As a starting point, although its population may differ in phenotype, they are all Peruvians preserving their cultural roots, which are recognized as part of a larger matrix that shapes Peruvian identity. And, like any living organism, culture is constantly evolving changing, enriching, and growing over time. The influence of four continents is just astonishing and how all those continents has blended and have brought a new idiosincraciy, or even to say idiosincracies, a transversal

interaction of acceptance and made belong what over 500 years ago was others and not ours in a broadly sense of explanation.<sup>14 16</sup>

### 3.2 Syncretism of Cultures, Histories and Idiosyncrasies

As a brief prelude to conclude the previous chapter, I would like to reflect on how this syncretism of cultures can be explained and described. Speaking as a Peruvian who self-identifies as *mestiza*, with a heritage that spans four continents, and based on what I have heard from family members and read in books about my ancestors, I, like many other Peruvians, descend from Indigenous peoples of Peru, Africans, Arabs, Chinese, Japanese, and Europeans. We are a *métissage* of cultures and ethnicities.

This is something common throughout Abya Yala. It is important to remember that before the arrival of the *conquistadores*, everything already had its own names and meanings. There were no "savages," but rather deeply compassionate, community-centered cultural civilizations with rich traditions, complex social structures, and profound *cosmovisions*. The "savages" narrative was simply a colonial Western construct used to justify greed-driven objectives and the brutal massacres that followed.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, this narrative continues today in more subtle and indirect forms through interventionism in the region and beyond. The underlying logic remains the same: to gradually exterminate populations. This is carried out by poisoning water sources, contaminating agriculture, destroying ecosystems, enabling illegal mining, and assassinating environmental and Indigenous activists from legal and ilegal transnationals.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Dr. Mariano Querol y Dr. Saúl Peña: Idiosincracia y cohesion social – Anomia, Resiliencia y Comportamiento Colectivo (Coloquios, Colegio Medico del Perú)

<sup>17</sup> Edward W. Said: Culture and Imperialism 36 37

<sup>18</sup> Giles Tremlett: Operation Condor: The Cold War Conspiracy That Terrorised South America, Carlos Simeon: "Más de 3000 niños fueron diagnosticados con plomo en la sangre", DW: Espinar: minería y contaminación

What is fascinating about this *métissage* and transculturation is that each culture has contributed to the shaping of modern Peru. At the same time, the culture of the Indigenous peoples of Peru is, fortunately, still well preserved, thanks to what was saved despite the destruction caused by colonization. Much has been lost, but we continue to reconstruct our past: a past that was heavily damaged, though not erased, thanks to the resistance of the people.

New information continues to emerge about Peruvian history prior to colonization, what is referred to as Pre-Columbian cultures. Archaeological discoveries reveal new sites, civilizations, and cultural legacies, bringing to light aspects of a past that was once systematically silenced, as often happens in times of colonization and genocide.<sup>19</sup>

Today, it is even possible to learn about our ancestry through DNA analysis. But beyond that, there is something deeper that connects us all: conventional science tells us that we all descend from a common African ancestor. In other words, we are all connected like one vast, literal human family.<sup>2021</sup>

We all vibrate to sound, and that vibration is something that connects us. Music connects us. *“It has been said since ancient times that the nature of reality is much closer to music than to a machine, and this is confirmed by many discoveries in modern science. The essence of a melody does not lie in its notes; it lies in the relationships between the notes, in the intervals, frequencies, and rhythms. When a string is set vibrating, we hear not only a single tone but also its overtones – an entire scale is sounded. Thus each note involves all the others, according to current ideas in particle physics.”*<sup>21</sup>

Listening to the music that has endured as a form of resistance through centuries of abhorrent historical conditions is essential. It deserves to be heard and respected, simply because it has survived. It carries the stories of the voiceless, of the exploited, of the marginalized people who, nevertheless, endured and overcame a state of subjugation. This music also brings inspiration, beauty, and

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<sup>19</sup> Ruth Shady (1946) y el descubrimiento de la civilización Caral, la más antigua de América

<sup>20</sup> Cristina Sáez: Los modernos humanos modernos venimos de una sola migración desde África

<sup>21</sup> Joachim-Ernst Berendt with a Foreword by Fritjof Capra: The World is Sound Nada Brahma – Music and the Landscape of Consciousness Xi Xii Xiii

healing. It awakens power and awareness, offering a contrast to mass commercial media, colonized literature, which often promotes false imaginaries and stereotypes that fuel discrimination, racism, and prejudice against specific ethnic and cultural groups, to continue serving agendas rooted in systemic injustice and colonial violence. We should shift from the eye to ear, so *“from masculine to feminine values that often been associated with our cultural transformation – from analysis to synthesis, from rational knowledge to intuitive wisdom, from domination and aggression to non violence and peace.”*<sup>2122</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Akademie der Künste: Colonial Repercussions – Peggy Piesche and Nana Adusei – Poku in dialogue

## 4. STRUGGLES FOR LATIN AMERICAN IDENTITY

The struggles across Latin America share many similarities. In this section, I will focus on the Peruvian experience, which remains an open and ongoing reality. Since colonial times, these struggles have shaped political and social systems through impositions and alliances between different ethnic groups in Peru and the Spanish conquistadores. These alliances, often formed due to internal divisions within the Tawantinsuyo (The Inka Empire), were strategically exploited by the spaniards to ensure the conquest and domination of the Inca Empire.

### 4.1 Historical Struggles<sup>23</sup>

Eight years before the conquistadores arrived in what is now Peru in 1524, a devastating plague struck the Tawantinsuyo, killing the Inka Huayna Capac and his already designated successor. This marked the beginning of the epidemic outbreaks. According to historical evidence, smallpox likely entered the region through Indigenous people from Panama who had been in contact with Chíncha merchants, who, in turn, had previously interacted with the conquistadores. Measles was another deadly disease brought by the Spanish conquistadores. At the time, no one had immunity in the Tawantinsuyo for these diseases. These viruses spread rapidly across the Abya Yala already previous to arrive the arrival of the spaniards to the Tawantinsuyo.

When the spaniards first arrived in Peru, the population was estimated at around 12 million. By the time they returned on their third travel in 1532, following the spread of diseases, the population had dropped to approximately 9 million. By 1720, it had been reduced to just 600,000 due to epidemics, exploitation, abuse, and widespread crimes against humanity, genocides committed during the conquest.

Three continents collided in this historical moment: the invaders and oppressors (the Spaniards or Europeans), the Indigenous peoples of Abya Yala and later,

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<sup>23</sup> Sucedió en el Perú (TVPerú) – La Conquista del Tawantinsuyo – 02/07/2018

the Africans brought as slaves by the Spaniards. It is a traumatic history marked by horrors and atrocities, all underpinned by the legal and ideological justification of the Doctrine of Discovery and greed.<sup>24</sup>

The Castilian Crown provided the global legal framework for the conquest. During Pizarro's third travel that of the conquer, he imprisoned and executed the Inka Atahualpa.<sup>23</sup> This period saw the introduction of racism and the ideology of ethnic superiority in Peru, a toxic legacy of colonization. A hierarchical social structure based on skin color was established, with the Spaniards placed at the top and Indigenous people, the true owners of the land, at the bottom. In the early colonial decades, Peru already had a mixed population. As phenotypical distinctions became harder to enforce, the *casta* system was created to maintain "racial" divisions and control, domination.<sup>25</sup>

This macabre system laid the foundation for a society that still suffers from the colonial legacy not only in social hierarchies, but also in issues related to land ownership, environmental degradation, and human rights by the actual elites.<sup>25</sup> These effects have evolved over time, changing names from colonialism to neocolonialism, imperialism, and neoliberalism, all contributing to the foundations of a savage capitalism that continues to exploit people and the planet.

Even after the Castilian Crown withdrew and independence was declared, a structure of discrimination remained. People were categorized based on ancestry: Spaniards' descendants born in the colonies were called *criollos*, and children of Spanish and Indigenous descent were labeled as *mestizos* and they had less rights than the Spaniards or *creoles*.<sup>25</sup>

These classifications reflected the ideology of white supremacy created to control the colonies. This persists today where the elites and western societies "white", has the historical privilege by these ideologies of domination with power that continues to be until these days, despite a transversal interactions that has been as an outcome, corruption, and greed in the political system has spread, where

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<sup>24</sup> Sheldon Wolfchild: The Doctrine of Discovery: Unmasking the Domination Code

<sup>25</sup> Carlos Lopez Beltrán: Sangre y Temperamento – Pureza y Mestizaje en las sociedades de Castas Americanas 291-296

the identity of State has loose the mirage, but the population is resisting as over 500 years ago, the neo-liberalism politic and capitalism that deteriorate the system with the foreign intervention.<sup>26</sup>

“Whiteness is a fiction, is a social construct, an agreed-on myth that has empirical grit because of its effect, not its essence.” “It is real, in the sense that societies and rights and goods and resources and privileges have been built on its foundation.”<sup>27</sup> What is race (other than genetic imagination) and why does it matter? “Race is the classification of a species, and we are the human race, period.”<sup>28</sup>

For the colonizers, Indigenous people were seen as soulless, uncivilized, lazy, and incapable of governing themselves. These dehumanizing views served as propaganda to justify domination, forced evangelization, torture, mass murder and genocides.

We must recognize that after formal colonialism ended, neocolonialism and imperialism continued in different forms. Former colonial powers often undermine the full independence of their former colonies by supporting coups and exploiting natural resources. In Latin America, social inequality is deeply rooted in this history. The elites, descended from the colonizers, continues to benefit from a systems of privilege, while the vast majority who speak Indigenous languages such as Quechua, Aymara and other indigeneous languages were and are historically excluded, even if nowadays have been done some progress. They still suffer the colonial repercussions and the neo-liberalism exploitation. Recently, a few days ago, the bodies of 13 miners were found, tortured and then killed, in the Pataz region, a region that produces gold, but where the income does not benefit its inhabitants. Two people has been arrested from other asaults and they have found arms of long distance, war arms as well, who has gave those arms to them, that is now under investigation.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Eduardo Galeano: Las Venas Abiertas de América Latina 15-17

<sup>27</sup> Robin Diangelo: White Fragility, Why it is so hard for white people to talk about racism Foreword by Michael Eric Dyson ix x

<sup>28</sup> Toni Morrison: The Origin of Others (Foreword by Ta-Nehisi Coates) 15

<sup>29</sup> Alcalde de Pataz se quiebra tras asesinatos de trabajadores: “Este país está podrido”, Reuters: La dolorosa matanza de mineros en Perú evoca la “maldición del oro” de los Andes.

From its founding, the Peruvian Republic was shaped by discriminatory principles, where speaking Spanish was tied to national identity. Today, Peruvian society is pluricultural, even if the Constitution has not fully recognized this reality yet. The law has gradually begun to recognize Peruvians whose mother tongue is not Spanish from a change in the constitution in the 90's. Quechua is now taught in academic settings, but the work of dissemination and its incorporation into practice needs to be institutionalized, and more importantly, it needs to be applied. The laws exist, but not always are applied. However, the path to full recognition and justice has still a long path. A strong collective identity is needed to move forward and despite ongoing foreign interventionism, the influence of Imperialism in culture that continues to spread imperialistics, domination, denigration and racism in literature, cinema, tv programs, eurocentric-music, in other words the cultural-products in the collective-imaginary of the ex-colonies.<sup>30</sup> Peru and other former colonies continue striving for true freedom and self-determination coping with the colonial repercussions, that should be repair and made justice, stopp the foreing interventionist that have the aid of the elites.

In the pseudoscience of the 19th century, the idea of race as a biological construct began to take hold, making it easier to believe that many of the divisions we see in society are natural. However, as Robin DiAngelo explains, "race, like gender, is socially constructed. We need to understand the social and economic investments that drove science to organize society and its resources along racial lines and why this organization is so enduring." <sup>31</sup>

The dehumanization of enslaved people was not just a byproduct of slavery but a deliberate ideological construction. As Toni Morrison insightfully observes, "The necessity of rendering the slave a foreign species appears to be a desperate attempt to confirm one's own self as normal. The urgency of distinguishing between those who belong to the human race and those who are decidedly non-human is so powerful the spotlight turns away and shines not on the object of degradation but on its creator." <sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Edward W.Said: Culture and Imperialism 94 95

<sup>31</sup> Robin DiAngelo: White Fragility, Why it is so hard for white people to talk about racism 15-16

<sup>32</sup> Toni Morrison: The Origin of Others (Foreword by Ta-Nehisi Coates) xiii

## 4.2 Modern-Day Challenges

Peru is a rich country, abundant in resources, minerals, biodiversity (flora and fauna), water, and vast territory. It is the second-largest country in terms of the Amazon region. Culturally and archaeologically, it is known as the archaeological capital of Abya Yala. However, it is clear that colonization has left behind many chaotic social and political problems, and the discriminatory legal system has shaped the country. Despite its independence and the pursuit of cultural identity, these issues persist.

The complex socio-political, economic, cultural, and religious context that Peru has endured since colonial times is often referred to as colonial repercussions. This includes wars, such as the War of the Pacific, in which both Peru and Bolivia lost significant territories to Chile. Foreign interventions, including companies with Chilean and British capital, particularly over the nitrate industry, played a major role. The conflict highlights the concessions and taxes that Bolivia sought to benefit from, but the companies disagreed with the sovereignty and decisions of the nation.<sup>33</sup> The imperialist presence in the region is also reflected in conflicts like the Falklands (Malvinas) War, where British intervention further exemplified the ongoing imperialist influence in Latin America.<sup>34</sup>

Today, neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism function in different ways, yet they share a common goal: to secure the extraction of resources and ownership of land for multinational corporations, particularly mining companies. This is achieved through concession laws that often favor these extractivist companies, many of which come from Western countries where the main companies come from USA, Mexico, Canada, Australia, Japan, Switzerland, the UK, China, and South Africa. These corporations extract resources while contributing very little to local communities, with what they do pay often ending up in the hands of corrupt politicians. These politicians, in turn, are often supported by multinational corporations that benefit from the existing political environment in Peru.

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<sup>33</sup> Patricio Grance. La Guerra Del Pacífico y la consolidación del imperialismo británico en el sur americano

<sup>34</sup> BBC Cuan vigente esta en Argentina el reclamo por la soberanía de las Islas Malvinas/Falklands

Extractivism, especially from the mining industry, lacks proper regulation and leads to pollution of the environment and harm to the surrounding population.<sup>35</sup>

Additionally, illegal Chinese fishing fleets are looting the seas, likely with the tacit approval of corrupt politicians who either allow or permit these illegal activities. This mirrors the illegal mining carried out by Chinese nationals, locals, and other foreign actors in Peru's Amazon region, further exacerbating the exploitation of Peru's natural resources and the suffering of its people.<sup>36</sup>

Foreign intervention, primarily from the USA, has been historically well documented, along with that of other Western countries. In other words, the former colonial and actual imperialistic powers keep Peru, Latin America, and the Global South in a state of undermined progress, not because the population is incapable or incompetent (as the colonial propaganda suggested in their culture imperialim), but because of the global corrupt system that maintains the status quo in power and keeps colonial structures functioning, but in a modern and sophisticated way, without truly being a democratic system.<sup>37</sup>

Within this historical context, the challenge is the liberation from foreign intervention in Peru's sovereignty and the corrupt system that comes with it. Those who do not align with their agendas are imprisoned or even killed, as happened with the current ex-president, Pedro Castillo, who was imprisoned without a legal trial at the moment of his detention, a fate shared by many other activists and social representatives fighting for the protection of nature, land, and human rights. The challenge is not only limited to this situation; we now see this system spreading worldwide, a non-democratic system where criminals have free movement, receive pardons, and are not even prosecuted. This issue has already been escalating in our region, and now we also see it in the West.

I believe that the challenges we face today unite us more than ever. We must organize ourselves and work to dismantle the colonial ideological framework,

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<sup>35</sup> BBC News Mundo: Guillermo D.Olmo: "Les han dado patende de corso": como la mineria ilegal se extendió por Perú hasta llevar a la matanza en una mina de Pataz.

<sup>36</sup> Diálogo Político: Paolo Benza: La Pesca China amenaza la soberanía marítima del Perú

<sup>37</sup> The Guardian: Giles Tremlett: Operation Condor: the cold world conspiracy that terrorized South America

using art as a tool for resistance and transformation. In this thesis, the focus is on music, a form of art capable of confronting the psychopathic, cannibalistic systems that shape our world, and mobilize a collective action against oppression, fascism, and authoritarianism.

It is important to move beyond viewing these issues as isolated. Everything is interconnected. Similar socio-political, economic, cultural, and religious experiments have been carried out for decades, if not longer, across former colonies. I arrive at this conclusion by observing what has happened in the former colonies and, more recently, in the West. These practices are part of a broader imperial agenda that has worked to alienate individuals from their reality, making them easier to manipulate, especially in the West, where the consensus supporting a racist system has persisted and allowed the continued exploitation of former colonies and their resources for decades. Media control plays a key role, shaping global public perception and promoting cultural products that normalize specific values and worldviews, often reinforcing the denigration of populations based on their origins.

The challenge, then, is to break this system and reconstruct a new, fairer, decolonized world rooted in justice and respect for human rights, one that guarantees dignity for all. Music, as I will explore in the following chapters, is not just a form of artistic expression; it is a vital tool in this resistance. It has the power to confront the oppressive systems that silence voices and to amplify those calling for change. Until we internalize this shared right to live with dignity, we risk heading toward civilizational collapse. As *La Pachamama* (Mother Earth in Quechua) can no longer withstand the destructive forces of exploitation, humanity is rapidly approaching the point of no return in the climate crisis, a crisis deepened by the withdrawal of one of the world's most powerful nations (economically and military) from the Paris Agreement.

## 5. THEODORO VALCÁRCEL: A PERUVIAN AYMARA COMPOSER

Theodoro Valcárcel (Puno, 1896 – Lima, 1942) was born in Puno, the folklore capital of Peru, a city in the southeastern part of the country located on the shores of Lake Titicaca. *"Lake Titicaca is the largest freshwater lake in South America and the highest of the world's large lakes. It is one of fewer than twenty ancient lakes on Earth and is believed to be three million years old. Lake Titicaca sits at 3,810 meters above sea level and lies between Peru to the west and Bolivia to the east. It has 200 ecoregions, based on analysis of species richness, species endemism, unique higher taxa, unusual ecological or evolutionary phenomena. An area rich in cultural values. The Sun Island, on the side of actual Bolivia has an Inca temple to worship the Sun which is related to the legend that associates lake Titicaca with the origin of the founders and the first rulers of the Tawantinsuyo."*<sup>38</sup> In this remarkable geographical, historical and cultural setting, Valcárcel was born. He was of Aymara heritage, one of the many Indigenous peoples of Peru.

### 5.1 Biography and Contributions

Theodoro Valcárcel's composition state the urgency to make place of the contribution and participation of the indigeneous people in the Peruvian culture and not only the cultural contributions by the creoles. Is a sign of empathy, humanity, justice and understanding the marginalization of the majority of the indigenous people in Peru. On this way he was giving a voice to voicelss and place the music of indigenous people in the scene of the music of the elites. He was an indigenist composer. <sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Instituto Nacional de Recursos Nacionales INRENA: World Heritage Convention Tentative list for Republic of Peru.

<sup>39</sup> Patricia Caicedo, *The Latin American Art Song – Sounds of the Imagined Nations* 80 81

His music coincides with the musical modernism in Peru. His trajectory is divided into three stages:

The first phase reflects a Europeanizing music education acquired, reflection of the provincial environment at the end of the century that saw the nurturing of music as a distinction social trait, and that of the piano as its ultimate symbol. Fostered by his mother in his double facet interest as pianist and composer, he found in the music by Chopin and Liszt the start of his first creations. Before he was 18 years old, he was sent to Europe to study his academic music studies. Then there he gets to know the music of the great French impressionists, and was dazzle by Claude Debussy. His compositions of those years (1914-1919) show an imprint that Debussy leaves to him from there. The modernity in these pieces is surprising and unprecedented for the Peruvian art. Back in Peru before 1920, he was one of the main promoters of modernism. Historically is the first performer of Debussy in Peru.<sup>40</sup>

Second phase is the re-discovery of his Andean heritage, his Inka ancestry, he is nourished by the emerging Peruvian classics, to mention some: Luis E.Valcárcel, Mariátegui, Tello, Vallejo, Haya de la Torre. His approach to the Andean world was visceral, natural, spontaneous and not learned. Here is when he began his experimentations with a distinct harmonical language, developed, sensual, imitative of the universe that surrounded him: birds singing, the lakeside landscape of Puno, the polychrome clothing, all correlated on its sounding textures.<sup>40</sup>

His third phase is after his second travel from Europe 1929, and there is when he arrives to his nationalist Zenit with the *Suite Indígena* and some of the Lieds of “Treinta y un cantos del alma vernacular” (Thirty-one songs of the vernacular soul). This work is where I will stop and describe, where we find the rich Peruvian heritage multilingual with poetry in Quechua, Aymara, Withota, Campa, Yunka and also in Spanish, this is a prove of his compromise to give a place to the cultural contribution of the indigenous people of Peru, that is even a historical

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<sup>40</sup> Fernando Valcárcel: Elencos nacionales del Perú: Theodoro Valcárcel, el primer moderno

document, as until now has not been performed all, and I have the question if all of those languages are still spoken, a research that I will love to continue. We need to understand that from the moment of Peru's birth as a nation, it has faced numerous challenges, the constitution of that times implied that to be Peruvians you needed to speak Spanish, be Christian, be married, or have 25 years old. This meant that the indigenous people whose language was not Spanish, were excluded. A colonial repercussion that we have been dragging since the colonial times. In this sense he was an avant-garde, as many other composers in Latin America in their own way. We must also point out that Peruvian music is influenced by the Afro-Peruvian population, who brought with them musical traditions rooted in their African heritage. This rich cultural legacy has become an essential part of our pluricultural folklore.<sup>40</sup>

### **“WIPHALA TAKI (WIPHALA SONG)**

The path of music. Time.  
Serpent descending to the earth.  
Starry night and roots that deeply breathe  
humid darkness.  
Condor spreading its wings to take its first flight.  
Sky blue, shining sharp with the sun  
among the white clouds.  
Birds descend to the sea.  
Fish leaping between the waves.  
The serpent ascends to the earth, weaving harmony among the trees  
in the webs of spiders with translucent visions.  
Time. Music is the path.”<sup>41</sup>

(Bili Sánchez Montenegro)

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<sup>41</sup> Cesár Aguilar Alcedo: Takilka Acceso al Conocimiento Musical – Método Andino 10 (Waskar Chukiwanka Inka: Origen y constitución de la wifala. La Paz, Bolivia 2023

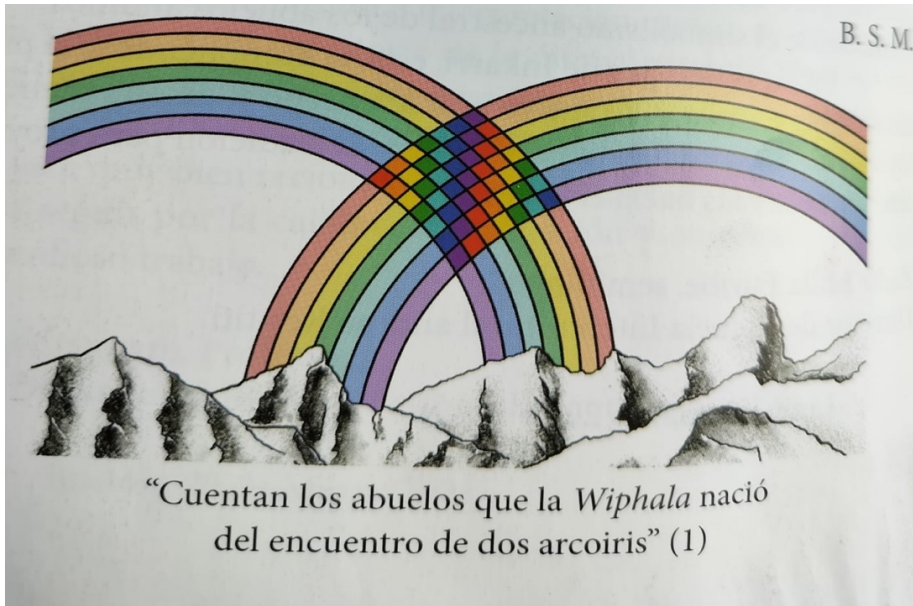


FIGURE 2 Wiphala.” The elders say that the Wiphala was born from the meeting of two rainbows.”<sup>42</sup>

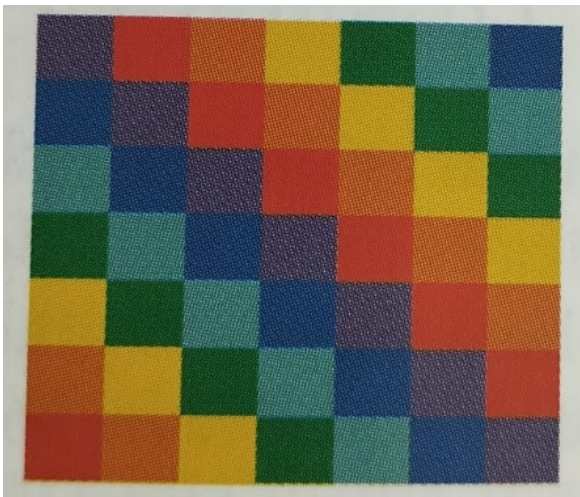


FIGURE 3. Wiphala<sup>42</sup>

“It is believed that the oldest and best-preserved specimen corresponds to the fabric of a *chuspa* (in quechua) or coca bag during the Tiwanaku culture, which was in existence between 1580 B.C. and 1187 A.D. (Franco, 2015).”<sup>43</sup> The Wiphala carries these meanings, which communicatively reflect elements of

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<sup>42</sup> Cesár Aguilar Alcedo: Takilka Acceso al Conocimiento Musical – Método Andino 10

collective identity as well as its subdivisions, offering an explicit representation of the value of unity in diversity.<sup>43</sup> Each color has its own meaning.

“The Wiphala in Peru is Symbol of the ancestral indigenous peoples, including the Quechua, Aymara, Uro, mestizo, and Amazonian peoples in the Puno region.”<sup>44</sup>

“In fact, the members of the Council of Indigenous Amautas of Tawantinsuyu go even further and affirm that one does not need to belong to an Indigenous people to feel represented by the Wiphala.” “In this new Pachakutyk (a 500-year cosmic cycle of light), the doors of knowledge, feeling, and wisdom that originally emerged from the *runas* (men of Andean-Amazonian origin) have been opened to all of humanity,” they state, adding that “all of us who consider ourselves children of Pachamama and live according to her natural processes are Indigenous, regardless of skin color, hair, eyes, or clothing. The Unancha and the Wiphala represent us and unite us across all corners of Abya Yala (the Americas) and the world. Wherever there is a Wiphala or a Unancha, there will be love and respect for the universe, for Pachamama, for the animals, the plants, the Earth, the communities, and the *allpa mama* (nature)”.<sup>1</sup>

*“Peru is a condition of existence that is born in the midst of the sea, the land, and the winds, from which all of us born here perceive as part of ourselves. The sea, the winds, and the land vibrate, generating loose sounds that only a few privileged ones can construct harmoniously and transform into melodies or symphonies that all the rest of us can hear, as works of art that are also ours.*

*Theodoro Valcárcel was one of those privileged ones, thanks to whom the sounds that arise in the surroundings of Lake Titicaca or those nourished by the transformed stones that cover the walls of the palaces of Cusco become beautiful musical phrases from the thousands of tonal variations that the pores of Valcárcel were able to capture and unite in such a way that we could organize them in our*

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<sup>43</sup> Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias de la Comunicación. 2023. Contreras Baspineiro Adalid: Wiphala: Comunicación fluyendo con el viento 32 35

<sup>44</sup> Gobierno Regional Puno – Consejo Regional Puno. ORDENANZA REGIONAL N° 006 -2022-GRP-CRP.

*perception of sounds, as beautiful phrases of a discourse about our world in which we live.*

*There is no better reference to ourselves than that which comes from the music of Mr. Theodoro Valcárcel, for although it is exposed to instruments that have arrived from all over, including those we learned to build right here, there is no doubt that the blowing of the winds, brushing against the reeds of our puna or the canvases of the intangible walls of Saqsaywaman, articulated with the multiple silences that cross between them, can be felt in the percussion and whistles of the quenás, accompanied by the subtle vibrations of the charangos and violins. Valcárcel transforms into music the theme of our identity without resorting to anything other than the articulation of everything that, in a disordered way, tends to present itself in the diverse circumstances within which we must live, particularizing, through musicalized sounds, everything that could be recognized or identified as part of our life. That is our identity with our world. That is what Theodoro Valcárcel's work transmits to us.”<sup>45</sup>*

*Luis Lumbreras  
Anthropologist and archaeologist*

## **5.2 Analysis of Suray Surita**

*“The poem, Suray-Surita, is a popular poem, that is part of the oral tradition”,<sup>46</sup> it is the first song of the cycle *Four Inca Songs*, written in the Quechua language and based on a popular Quechua poem. This cycle is part of *Thirty-One Songs of the Vernacular Soul for voice and piano*, it is a collection that showcases great beauty in its music. *Thirty-One Songs of the Vernacular Soul* consists of lieder written in Quechua, Aymara, Withota, Campa, Yunka, and Castilian (the term "Castilian" is used in Latin America to refer to Spanish)<sup>47 48</sup>*

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<sup>45</sup> Luis Lumbreras: *Elencos Nacionales del Perú: Testimonios sobre el legado de Theodoro Valcárcel*

<sup>46</sup> Patricia Caicedo: *Art Songs in Indigenous languages?*

<sup>47</sup> Patricia Caicedo: *The Latina American Art Song – Sound of the Imagined Nations* 81, Emily Jo Riggs: *The Art Song of South America: An Exploration through Performance* 60

<sup>48</sup> Theodoro Valcárcel. *31 Cantos del Alma Vernacular* (n.p)

The changes in tempo clearly reflect elements of *Inka folk melodies*<sup>49</sup> and incorporate aspects of Andean culture, including the surrounding environment, nature, geography, and the spiritual connection to the Andean mountain chain and highlands and archeological sites as *the walls of the palaces of Cusco*<sup>45</sup>. In this work, Theodoro Valcárcel makes evident use of the Andean pentatonic scale, both in the melodic line and in the accompaniment, which moves fluidly around a minor third.<sup>47</sup>

*Suray Surita* with its text in Quechua poetry that speaks of love, an unconditional love that, despite betrayal, still endures. It reflects the inability to love again, expressing feelings of loss and the mourning phase that follows the end of a relationship. It also explores the process of overcoming betrayal, the allegories of the heart, and the emotional release involved in reclaiming a former lover. This process serves as a form of self-healing through the externalization of the emotional state of the person experiencing it.

The title *Suray Surita*, which can be interpreted as my love, my sweet love<sup>50</sup>, is consistently a positive and affirming term, a name given to the beloved. What astonishes me is that the name and the words are intrinsically connected to emotion, which is one of the many distinctive characteristics of the Quechua language. There is no bitterness in the name itself, but rather in the rest of the text. This suggests that love, in any form, is sacred in itself, regardless of the outcome.

His lieder have been translated, and it is possible to find the translations beneath the original texts in the Peruvian version, revised and adapted by Edgar Valcárcel in 1986. A recording of *Suray Surita* can be found, performed by the renowned Peruvian soprano Yma Sumac, showcasing her incredible virtuosity and high-range bravura coloraturas. Here is a link to her interpretation of the orchestral version:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjIqbcwY50w&ab\\_channel=Chansons%2CFolkloreetVari%C3%A9t%C3%A9](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjIqbcwY50w&ab_channel=Chansons%2CFolkloreetVari%C3%A9t%C3%A9)

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<sup>49</sup> Emily Jo Riggs: *The Art Song of South America: An Exploration through Performance* 60

<sup>50</sup> Patricia Caicedo explanation

Love, in all its forms, is what *Four Inca Songs* is about: an essential and universal human condition, a feeling. When interpreting the cycle, the humble description I have shared may offer some guidance for the performance.

In my study of the songs, I could both see and feel the Andean world before me, along with the melancholic passion and unique spirit of the Quechua people. Peru, as a pluricultural society, embraces all of this, along with the festive elements of our Afro-Peruvian, European heritage and the many other cultures that shape our identity.

The Quechua people also have their own rich forms of festivity, distinct from Afro-Peruvian music and other regional traditions. Yet, all of these expressions, in their diversity, are deeply Peruvian.

Here the link where you can find three of the four *Inca Songs scores*. It is in the public domain:

[https://imslp.org/wiki/4\\_Canciones\\_Incaicas\\_\(Valc%C3%A1rcel%2C\\_Theodoro\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/4_Canciones_Incaicas_(Valc%C3%A1rcel%2C_Theodoro))

## 6. PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES TO TEACHING LATIN AMERICAN ART SONGS

In recent years, research on Latin American art songs from Abya Yala (the American continent) has gained more visibility. Some musicologists, such as Patricia Caicedo, have also collaborated with professors in the Abya Yala region. However, the incorporation of this repertoire into mainstream academic spaces remains limited specially in Europe. In many conservatories and universities, access to scores and materials still largely depends on the initiative of individual students or researchers. Additionally, it is often difficult to find scores in cities outside the capital region, as is the case of Finland, where they are usually only available at the Sibelius Academy library. The time it takes to receive the scores, as well as the payment process, also makes it somewhat inconvenient.

The integration of Latin American art songs into the curriculum depends significantly on the interests and openness of teachers and students. It requires a genuine will to explore other cultures, unfamiliar rhythms, languages, and the rich diversity that this repertoire embodies. By engaging with this music, classical vocal education can be significantly enriched and diversified. This repertoire deserves a place in formal music studies, not as a marginal or "alternative" option, but as an essential part of a globalized musical education.

We can see how as *“coloniality is not only a constitutive element of modernity and geopolitical divisions (Chatterjee, 1989, Mignolo, 2007) , but also a definitive element in the compartmentalization of knowledge and ways of being, expressing, learning and even performing. (Castro-Gómez, 2005).”*<sup>51</sup>

Despite these possibilities, most academic institutions continue to operate under outdated categorization systems for repertoire. While such lists serve as a useful framework for organizing composers by period or region, they often limit exploration. In practice, these systems heavily influence the choices made for

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<sup>51</sup> Australian Voice Vol.20 2019. Patricia Caicedo: Decolonizing Classical Singers' Mind: The Latin American and Iberian Art Song Repertoire 25

diploma recitals, especially at the D, C, or B levels, leaving little room for less conventional or non-European repertoire. I am not fully aware of the guidelines for the A-level, which is considered to be at a master's degree level; the only such program currently offered is at the Sibelius Academy, and their approach probably may differ, but I cannot be sure, as they have the Voice Degree focus on Lied. In the Universities of Applied Sciences not yet. Still, it is evident that a broader and more inclusive approach is necessary at all levels of training.

Another critical gap is the underrepresentation of female composers, even within the European canon. This is an area in urgent need of revision. As has often occurred in educational reform, progress in one direction can bring momentum in others. The inclusion of women composers and Latin American art songs must go hand in hand. Both reflect longstanding exclusions that demand collective pedagogical awareness and action.

In summary, expanding the curriculum to include Latin American art songs alongside works by female composers, is a necessary step toward a more inclusive, accurate, and enriching musical education. This shift depends not only on institutional reforms but also on the pedagogical will to challenge established norms and embrace the plurality of voices that truly represent our musical world.

Music history can serve as a strong entry point into broader cultural and artistic discussions, but it requires that the teacher be well-prepared to present it effectively. For example, there is a tradition of Latin American Baroque music, something I personally had no idea about during my early studies, as it was not taught at all in the conservatory I attended in Italy. I first heard of it from a peer in my early music education, an Italo-French student, who mentioned it. I am not sure whether Latin American Baroque was already included in the curriculum in French conservatories at the time; we never discussed it in depth. I was still very young and not yet ready to explore the topic further, but the seed was planted, and an intuitive sense of interest began to grow. Years later, during my university level music studies, I became more aware of this tradition and started researching it in depth. I also participated in concerts with the Aurinko Ensemble in Finland, which focuses on Latin American classical music. From that point on, my knowledge expanded, and I developed a deeper awareness of the significance

of this cultural heritage that must be share, because everyone should have the right to know it.

In the past, I have shared some Peruvian Baroque music with other history and ensemble teacher from other institutions, but there were no comments about it afterward. I think this is a response indicating a lack of interest in what I shared. In the current institution, I have noticed curiosity about Peruvian Baroque music. Who knows if it will be taught? I hope so.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The benefits of teaching cultural diversity through music are of vital importance for our societies, especially in these increasingly dark times in the historical trajectory of the 21st century. This is not to say that such struggles have not occurred before, in fact, many countries, particularly former colonies, have long suffered the consequences of political interventions and the destabilization of governments (coups) by corporations, transnational forces, and imperialist Western powers through their well-established *modus operandi*.

What has changed is that these realities are now being felt more clearly in the West. Unlawful and unjust treatment of citizens, which was previously inflicted largely upon “the others” in “the peripheries” in regions where human rights, international laws, and constitutional frameworks were routinely ignored, has now started to affect Western populations. We are witnessing a collapse of democratic principles, where power is concentrated in the hands of individuals or hidden forces, and where *fascism* is beginning to erode the foundations of human rights on a global scale.

For this reason, we must actively resist this programmed alienation and respond with culture as our educational tool, one among many art forms, with music being one of the most accessible and powerful. Latin American music, in particular, stands as a living testimony to centuries of interculturality and transculturation. Its sounds and forms reveal histories that have often been deliberately erased, suppressed, or devalued by colonial narratives and outdated cultural dogmas. These lingering colonial structures continue to shape how Latin American cultures are perceived, both within the region and beyond.

Until we confront and dismantle colonial, post-colonial, and neo-colonial systems of power, we will not be able to truly free ourselves or move forward toward a human society that is inclusive, just, and free from prejudice or hate. A form of global *neo-fascism* is unfolding unlawful, brutal, and dehumanizing. Becoming aware of how other regions, such as Latin America, have already suffered under

these systems is crucial. Ironically, this shared experience of oppression is what now unifies us under the threat of a crumbling democratic ideal.

Latin American art songs are a unique blend of Abya Yala Indigenous, African, and European elements, a result of cultural collision, adaptation, and survival. This repertoire, shaped by centuries of exchange between diverse peoples and continents, has given rise to an immensely rich musical heritage. For example, the flourishing of Baroque music in the *Abya Yala* region (a pre-colonial name for the Americas) reveals an important history that is often overlooked. Dances such as the *chacóna* and *sarabanda*, which originated or were transformed in the Americas, went on to influence European Baroque music profoundly. While Abya Yala Indigenous, African, and European contributions have been more visibly acknowledged, it is also important to recognize that Arab and Asian cultures have contributed in more subtle ways, sometimes indirectly through Iberian colonial legacies, and other times through more recent waves of migration and cultural exchange. These influences, while less pronounced, are part of the layered fabric of Latin American musical identity. Many other musical forms and traditions from *Abya Yala* remain unnamed, unrecognized, or awaiting further research. Recognizing and including this legacy in educational curricula is not only an educational necessity, but it is an ethical obligation.

In my personal experience, during my second year as a student, a history teacher briefly mentioned Latin American music and commented that "there was not much." Yet, of course, there is an entire world there. I felt as if the earth had swallowed me. That moment sparked a personal journey. Out of curiosity and love for my culture, I began researching Latin American music, particularly Latin American art songs. I discovered an entire universe, much of it documented in Spanish or Portuguese, and later, through conversations with musicologists as Camilo Pajuelo and Patricia Caicedo, composers, and fellow artists from Latin America. As I explored catalogs and books, my interest only deepened.

I recall a moment when a teacher encouraged me to feel the "Finnish melancholy" in a piece I was studying. I responded that I could feel a similar melancholy in my own culture's music. My answer seemed to surprise her. I was not able at the time to fully explain the deep multicultural and pluricultural roots of my country

and what that melancholy meant to me personally. I understand her confusion, as Finland is still in the process of becoming a truly multicultural society, it is currently bicultural, but I hope that through this humble work, I can contribute in some small way to that growth.

This happened while studying Latin American art songs: some teachers held preconceived notions, associating it with cheerful, light music. But I had to explain that, while many Latin American songs may use lively rhythms, the texts are often deeply melancholic. The music is not always just happy or festive, but melancholy and sadness also exist in our repertoire. *“Despise the sadness, the syncopated rhythm keeps the listener waiting and announces how the beloved, full of “saudade” (nostalgia and longing) can still sing through the pain of the separation. Here one can see a characteristic frequently found in Latin American songs, that they sing their sorrows “dancing” full of rhythm and sometimes in major keys, in contrast to the stereotypes that associate minor key and slow rhythm with sadness and major keys and fast rhythm with joy.”*<sup>52</sup>

At another institution, I sensed a lack of openness from the beginning, as if the question was: "What is she going to do with this?" I assume it was because this repertoire was not part of the curriculum or was not considered "high-level" music. In the end, I was allowed to present it, but I felt a subtle reaction, an unspoken sense that this was not the music we were supposed to be doing. As if Latin American music were somehow out of place. That left me with a feeling of uncertainty. I questioned myself, maybe they were right? But no. I dove deeper into the history and beauty of the repertoire. I continued, out of love and a belief in the value of recognition, education, and the importance of cultural and human heritage.

I came to the conclusion that this was the result of colonized institutions, colonized minds, and a system that was built on and still functions within a Eurocentric frame. I also try to be fair and consider that perhaps the teachers

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<sup>52</sup> Patricia Caicedo, *The Latin American Art Song – Sounds of the Imagined Nations* 31

simply lacked the knowledge or preparation to teach these songs, probably a combination of all of that.

When I asked my Lied pianist whether she had ever worked on the Latin American songs we were doing together in her main instrument lessons, the answer was no. I felt sad, and also sorry, because I recognized the courage it took for my Lied partner to work with me on this repertoire. In the end, the songs were performed in the Lied group lessons and ensemble classes, but not in her individual piano lessons.

Still, we continued, and eventually some teachers expressed their appreciation, not all, but enough. One even thanked me for bringing this music to their attention, and that felt like a true reward.

I've also introduced the music of Theodoro Valcárcel in auditions abroad, where it was well received. But it still has not made its way into the curriculum. Not yet.

During my studies of Latin American art songs, I have often encountered preconceived notions particularly among teachers, performers, and even some non-Western individuals in Europe, who are less familiar with the repertoire and tend to associate this music almost exclusively with joy, festivity, and colorful rhythms. These expectations reflect broader cultural stereotypes rather than the actual diversity of the music. While many Latin American songs do incorporate lively or dance-like rhythms, this does not mean they lack emotional depth.<sup>52</sup>

Unfortunately, these works are often trivialized or considered “undeveloped.” It is important to emphasize that there is often a striking contrast between vibrant musical settings and deeply melancholic or introspective texts. Sorrow, longing, and subtle emotional nuance are just as integral to this repertoire as celebration and vitality. Such reductive assumptions are frequently rooted in limited exposure to the region's full cultural complexity and are perpetuated by mass media portrayals that prioritize exoticism over authenticity. Recognizing this complexity is essential for engaging with Latin American art music respectfully and meaningfully, as well as for challenging existing cultural imperialism and acknowledging the richness of its musical heritage.

This is why I feel a personal duty to share the cultural diversity within our societies, particularly those aspects that have not yet been recognized or valued in the global North. To eliminate stereotypes, we must re-educate ourselves and walk this path together as a united human family. I believe in the transformative power of music as a tool for change, healing, and understanding.

Józef Maria Hoene-Wroński, defined music as “*the corporealization of the intelligence that is in sound*”.<sup>53</sup> So we can create our new reality, re-invent, out of the colonial, neo colonial impost system and break free from that, to free ourselves for new realities, planetary utopias<sup>54</sup> that will pave our path through music, with music to heal ourselves as society.

I am sharing a link to an interview with Mexican composer Gabriela Ortiz, in which she is interviewed by conductor Gustavo Dudamel. The conversation sheds light on the situation of Latin American classical music in academic contexts:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rV0kvgSDOKc&ab\\_channel=GustavoDudamel](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rV0kvgSDOKc&ab_channel=GustavoDudamel)

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<sup>53</sup> Patricia Caicedo: We are what we listen to: The Impact of Music on Individual and Social Health 115

<sup>54</sup> Colonial Repercussions – Angela David and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: Planetary Utopias

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